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Tuesday January 13 1998

Abu Dhabi D 8.50 Albania US$ 2 Andorra FF 10 Austria A$ 30 Bahrain BD 0.85 Belgium BF 70 Bulgaria LV 500 Canada C$ 3.85 Croatia KN 12.50 Cyprus C£ 1.00 Czech Republic KC56 Denmark DK 17 Dubai D 8.50 Egypt EE 6.50 Estonia K 30 Finland FM 15 France FF 12 Germany DM 3.80 Greece D 500 Hong Kong HK$ 25 Hungary F 260 Iceland IK 185 Israel NIS 11.50 Italy L 3,500 Jordan JD 1.25 Kenya KSH 160 Kuwait KD 0.60 Latvia US$ 2 Lebanon LL 3000 Luxembourg LF 65 Madeira E 270 Malta ML 0.50 Morocco D 25 Netherlands G 4.25 Norway NK 16 Oman OR 1.00 Pakistan R 65 Poland Z 6.20 Portugal E 240 Qatar QR 8.50 Russia US$ 2.75 Saudi Arabia R 10 Slovakia SK 65 Slovenia SLT 250 Spain P 250 Sweden SK 17 Switzerland SF 3.50 Thailand B 80 Turkey TL 170,000 Ukraine US$ 3.50 USA US$ 3.00

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

Andy Beckett with the hill farmers

Death of a way of life

G2 with European weather



Not all bad news for Mrs Cook

Is divorce good for women?

In G2 Plus Health, pages 10-11



Australian rules

How to turn new lads into new men

Education, G2 pages 12-13

New push for peace delights Unionists

'We hope it forms the basis for detailed negotiation. In the end, it is what the parties can agree that matters'

David Trimble
Ulster Unionist

'Murders have been cynically manipulated by Unionist leadership to intimidate the Government'

Mitchell McLaughlin
Sinn Fein



Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble (right) and colleague Ken Maginnis leave Stormont in bouyant mood yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: RUSSELL BOYCE

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

TONY Blair and Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, injected a sense of urgency into the search for a political settlement in Northern Ireland yesterday when they unveiled their blueprint for a new way forward.

It was the most significant development in 18 months of political talks, and left Sinn Fein marginalised. The party has so far gained little from negotiations, and pressure is likely to build up from hardline elements within the republican movement.

The Ulster Unionists, though, were delighted. The Government's paper appears closer to its position than the Framework Document, unveiled three years ago as a basis for negotiation.

The SDLP seemed to be less happy. But it welcomed the initiative as a basis for discussion, and was keen to push on immediately. The outline settlement provides for a devolved assembly in Northern Ireland, cross-border bodies with undefined powers, and an intergovernmental council. That would involve representation from Westminster and Dublin, as well as from the the assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its functions still have to be thrashed out at the Stormont talks.

The joint document, its wording the product of frantic overnight telephone conversations between Mr Blair in Tokyo and Mr Ahern in London, is designed to push the participating political parties into full negotiations. Each will deliver its response today.

Both governments are desperate to make progress before any further acts of terrorism can derail attempts to find a peaceful solution. They are banking on Sinn Fein remaining inside the negotiations.

Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, was last night at pains to stress it was up to the parties to negotiate around the plan. She refused to get drawn into commenting on parties' interpretation of the document, which runs to 600 words. She hailed the initiative as a breakthrough.

Ms Mowlam said: "We hope it forms the basis for detailed negotiation. In the end, it is what the parties can agree that is what matters."

David Andrews, the Irish foreign minister, said: "This has been a great day. We have produced a road map to a new agreement. The paper is an honest and courageous attempt to describe the structures within which agreement can be reached."

The document embraces the Ulster Unionists' concept of an intergovernmental council, the party's way of ensuring that cross-border bodies are downgraded in terms of importance. David

turn to page 3, column 3

Winners and losers, page 4; Leader comment, page 8

Pressure for wider curbs on smoking

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

THERE is widespread public demand for the Government to bring in tough new controls on smoking, including encouragement for bans at work and in restaurants and bars, according to a Guardian/ICM opinion poll published today.

As ministers prepare an unprecedented drive to improve the nation's health, the ICM poll shows that there is even majority support for a California-style smoking ban in all public places.

The poll is published as health ministers draw up new policy papers on public health and on smoking, which will mark the start of a major assault on health inequalities in Britain.

The Department of Health confirms it is looking at ways to encourage voluntary smoking bans, while not considering introducing legal bans on smoking.

The Guardian/ICM poll shows that ministers should resist "nanny state" jibes from their critics, with large majorities recorded in support of nearly every kind of prohibition.

Support runs strongly across all age groups and social classes, with large majorities in favour even among the 18 to 24-year-old age group, where smoking is more prevalent. Support was slightly stronger among women than men.

The results show there is overwhelming support for government-endorsed smoking bans at work (73 per cent); in restaurants and bars (64 per cent); and in planes, trains and buses (80 per cent). There is even majority support (54 per cent) for a ban in all public places, which could be taken to include smoking in the street.



Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the ICM findings on smoking is the strength of feeling on the subject.

Some 59 per cent said they "approved strongly" of smoking bans at work; 50 per cent felt strongly about the need for a smoking ban in restaurants and bars; 67 per cent strongly wanted to ban smoking on planes, trains and buses; and some 40 per cent "strongly approve" of bans in all public places.

Despite the fact that the 1996 Health Survey for England, published yesterday, shows that one in three people smoke, those who would "strongly disapprove" of the bans only amount to 16 per cent (at work), 17 per cent (in restaurants and bars), 11 per cent (on public transport) and 24 per cent (all public places).

● ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,200 adults aged 18+ by telephone between January 9 and 11. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

Guardian/ICM Opinion Poll

The Government is looking at ways of further reducing tobacco smoking, including encouraging bans in public places. Do you approve/ disapprove of smoking bans in:

	At work (%)	Restaurants and bars (%)	Planes, busses and trains (%)	All public places (%)
Approve	73	64	80	54
Disapprove	22	27	17	40
Neither	5	9	3	5

A drama in one act: angry scenes as Berkoff takes the burger shilling

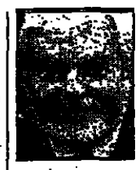


Steven Berkoff: 'easy to breathe high disdain'

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

LEADING actors, including Derek Jacobi and Robert Powell, have vowed never to work with actor and director Steven Berkoff.

Their anger comes as it emerged that Berkoff had broken a strike organised by the actors' union, Equity. While other stars are turning down offers to make voiceovers for commercials, Berkoff has made the first of a series of five advertisements for McDonald's — saying he needs the money. It is estimated that he could earn up to £5,000 for each of the commercials.



'I'm totally outraged. I've never worked with Berkoff and I probably never will'

Derek Jacobi



'I am very shocked and also very surprised by Steven Berkoff's actions'

Prunella Scales

The dispute involves fees for voiceovers for television and radio commercials. The advertising industry wants to cut rates of pay for voiceovers by up to 60 per cent.

Commenting on Berkoff's action, Derek Jacobi said: "I'm totally outraged. I've never worked with Steven Berkoff and I probably never will."

Robert Powell said: "I am hugely disappointed in Steven Berkoff. His actions are a betrayal of the efforts of others to win the dispute. I would be disinclined to work with him in the future."

Tim Pigott-Smith said: "Steven Berkoff has let himself down as well as everybody else. It is just as well he's practised in the one-man show because that may well be all that he's left with." Prunella Scales said: "I am very shocked and very surprised by Steven Berkoff's actions."

Defending his decision to make the commercials, Berkoff said: "I need the money. Last year I staged plays at the Mermaid and suffered a personal loss of £50,000."

Berkoff, a writer as well as director and actor, achieved mainstream success in films like Beverly Hills Cop and Rambo. He added: "It is a shame that actors like Jacobi should utter their contemptible opinions about my behaviour. I suppose when you are a successful wage-earner, it is easy to breathe your high moral disdain. As regards not wishing to work with me, I don't believe I would wish to work with anyone who could lend their voices for a quick quote that might hurt or defame a fellow actor. Anyway, I don't think he would survive the experience. However, I don't wish to wreck their cause and will wait until the dispute is solved."

But Royal Shakespeare Company actor Peter Egan attacked Berkoff's reasoning. "If he bothered to come to the meetings, he'd have realised that a lot of low- and middle-earners were taking the moral high ground because they use commercials to subsidise more poorly paid work.

"I have admired a lot of his work in the past. I wouldn't ever want to work with him after this."

Until now the dispute, which entered its current phase last September, has received solid support from the acting community. Stars such as Helen Mirren and Robert Lindsay have renounced lucrative commercials contracts to support the union's stance.

Although top names can earn as much as £30,000 for commercials, the smaller fees paid to lesser-known names enables many to work in the fringe or subsidised theatre sector.

The advertising industry argues that the UK is out of step with the rest of Europe, where fees tend to be much lower. But a meeting tomorrow of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising could see a breakthrough in the impasse.

Inside

Home

Analysis

Sport

Comment and Letters 8; Obituaries 10; Crossword 15; G2 Quick Crossword 15; Radio, TV and Weather 16

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Switch to an Abbey National Bank Account and, to make the transfer easier, we'll give you a 4 month free overdraft.

An offer like that's got to be front page news.

ABBEY NATIONAL

Because life's complicated enough.

P3

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Sketch

Donald ducks the biggest question



Simon Hoggart

THE Commons yesterday debated the Scotland Bill, which will establish a new assembly in Edinburgh.

The Government's case was put by Donald Dewar, who has already announced that he hopes to become the first First Minister for Scotland.

He was, therefore, moving the Second Reading of the Make Me The Boss Bill. He did a competent and witty job. Almost anyone would enjoy speaking for an hour on the general topic: why I should be richer and more powerful than I am already.

But Mr Dewar is always a pleasure to hear. His particular skill is using jokes and sophistry to deflect the more damaging attacks.

Yesterday these centred, once again, on the West Lothian Question. How is that, after the new assembly is founded and Mr Dewar enthroned in glory, English MPs will not be able to vote on Scottish matters, but Scottish MPs at Westminster will continue to be able to vote on English affairs?

Since it is easily possible to imagine a situation where, say, the Labour Party has a majority in the Union as a whole, but the Opposition parties hold most English seats, this is a matter of real practical importance.

For that reason — common sense being of little use here — the Government resorts to the higher metaphysics to answer the Question.

Several Tories rose to insist that it was an outrage. Richard Shepherd (C, Aldridge) said that the whole point of democracy was that everyone was equal. Indeed, it was the very first principle of democratic government. How could abolishing it enhance democracy?

Douglas Hogg, a man whose reputation has been itself much enhanced by the fact that Jack Cunningham is proving an even more disastrous Minister of Agriculture than he was, demanded that after devolution English domestic business should "not be addressed, spoken to, or voted upon by Members for Scotland."

That sounded sensible and fair, so Mr Dewar naturally evaded it. If Mr Hogg wanted a federal system, he said, he would find that he had many allies.

(Of course, Mr Hogg wants no such thing, as Mr Dewar very well knew.)

Mr Shepherd persisted. He pointed out that the bill would create two different types of MP. "We will not have equal status. We will not have equal rights."

Mr Dewar then produced his masterstroke, a line of argument which would have made the heart of any Jesuit theologian beat faster. The gist of it was that, since Parliament was itself a democratic body, nothing which it decided could be, *ipso facto*, anti-democratic.

"If Parliament uses its power and sovereignty to dispose of this business in the way we are proposing . . .", he said, going on to accuse Mr Shepherd of being opposed to democratic principles by his support of democracy. I gasped, silently, in admiration.

There was a wonderful moment later. Michael Ancram, the Tory spokesman, asked almost as an aside the latest estimate of the cost of the new assembly building.

"In the region of £50 million," said Mr Dewar, also almost as an aside.

Fifty million? Who on earth is he kidding? I doubt if 50 million will buy the onyx marble for the toilets alone, never mind the porcelain, the bronze fitments, the carved and chased panelling in the public rooms, the hand-woven carpets depicting clan tartans, the state-of-the-art telecommunications, offering terminals on every desk with built-in access to the Internet, and, for all I know, the lapis lazuli inlays in the First Minister's majestic suite of offices.

No elected legislature anywhere has ever decided that one key area where they can save on public spending is their own billet. Fifty million? I shouldn't be at all surprised if it came in at four times that.

Review

No news is bad news for Young

Anne Karpf

Kirsty Young
Breakfast Show
Talk Radio

NOT content with tilting at Channel 4 in her Channel 5 evening news programme, Kirsty Young seemed set to take on Radios 4 and 5 Live as Talk Radio's new breakfast show host. It was a smart signing since Young, within a couple of months, had suddenly became the hottest of newscasters — for her strong, direct style, her sitting on rather than behind a desk, and the length of her fringe.

These last two are of little use on radio. The first was evident in yesterday's opening programme in which Young, sounding relaxed, brimmed with Scottish wit (calling her co-host a "right nippy sweetie"). But the prospect of the show rivalling the Today programme or the Radio 5 Live breakfast show receded rapidly when it become clear this wasn't current affairs but a chat programme, distinctly light on news.

While the other news channels were discussing Northern Ireland, Talk had almost nothing to say on the subject. Although Talk Radio is targeting an audience alienated by the BBC, was it wise to return again and again to Robin Cook's marriage, drafting in the ill-qualified Edwina Currie to pronounce on what made Westminster marriages work? And was Young too polite to remind Currie, when she quoted her own marriage approvingly, that it was now on the road to divorce?

With James Whitaker making his debut as the station's new royal correspondent, and William Hague as the star guest, this was shaping up to be everyone you'd least like to hear gathered into one programme.

Certainly, apart from a short and superficial item on leaking breast implants, the Cook story, and Whitaker on Diana's burial place, the programme's first 90 minutes were choking with inane showbiz news — Roseanne Barr's divorce, Christian Slater's arrest. Among Young's other duties, she was required to run a "Dial Miles" competition. The paucity of news reporters was obvious; not for nothing is the show's e-mail address Kirstytalk.

Increasingly the ads seemed like a comment on the rest. "Are you satisfied with the way your career is going?" asked an American "aspirations and motivations counsellor". It was hard to know if he was addressing Young or Hague. "You too could make a load of money doing absolutely nothing", suggested a McDonald's ad.

Getting Hague scarcely constituted a coup — he was on Nicky Campbell's 5 Live phone-in last week where almost all the same ground, and more, was covered, and though Young was crisp and sharp in her questioning, Campbell was more dogged.

Hague's only real revelation was to admit he woke up to Capital Radio. In a few seconds, the fragments of that station's claims to hipness were shattered.

On Day One, Young emerged as quick, smart, and squandered, in a programme without substance.

Birds and bees confused by mild winter weather

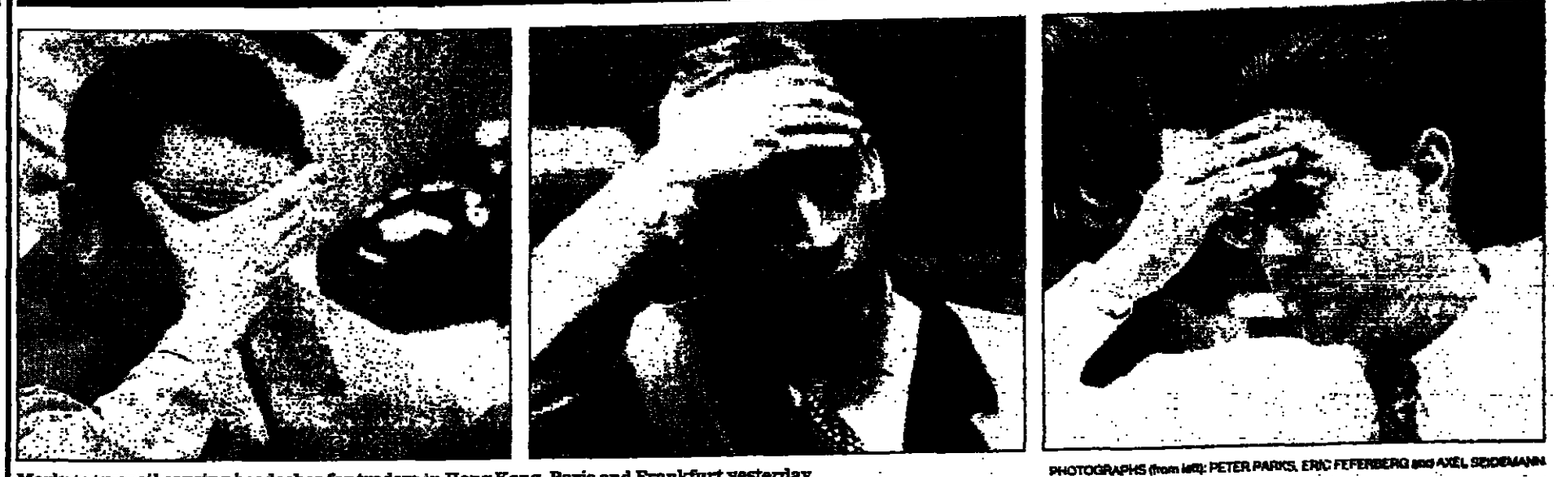
Tim Radford
Science Editor

PRIMROSES and snowdrops popped up early, and the songbirds were in full throat.

"Missel-thrushes, robins, dunnocks and wrens have all been in full song since before Christmas," said Tim Melling, of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. According to Roger Key, an entomologist with English Nature at Peterborough, ladybirds, hoverflies and the small tortoiseshell had woken from the insect equivalent of hibernation and taken wing.

The Met Office yesterday said there were record January temperatures of 15C and 13.5C at Heathrow and Glasgow airports on Friday.

Financial shockwaves around the world



Markets turmoil causing headaches for traders in Hong Kong, Paris and Frankfurt yesterday

PHOTOGRAPHS (from left): PETER PARKS, ERIC FEFFERBERG and AXEL SEIDEMANN

Interest rates set to fall

Turmoil in Asia combines with gloomy figures for UK economy

Mark Atkinson
Economics Correspondent

CITY dealers were yesterday betting billions of pounds that the Bank of England will be forced to cut interest rates before the end of the year to prevent Asia's financial crisis plunging the economy into recession.

In an abrupt change of mood, futures traders decided that the threat of a global downturn now outweighs the danger of domestic economic overheating in spite of fresh evidence of buoyant high street trade over Christmas.

As a result, they shelved predictions of further interest rate hikes from the current level of 7.25 per cent and discounted a half point reduction by the end of the year.

"The futures markets have gone ballistic," said Gerard Lyons, chief economist at DKB International, the Japanese bank, in London.

"People have woken up to the fact that Asia exists and that the crisis there will have a negative economic and financial impact on the UK and the rest of the world."

The switch in sentiment was triggered by the deepening financial turmoil in Asia, where developments sent fresh shockwaves around the world yesterday, combined with gloomy UK economic figures.

Manufacturing production dropped unexpectedly by 0.4 per cent in November compared with October and is now expanding at an underlying rate of only 0.5 per cent a year, the slowest pace for 16 months, according to the Office for National Statistics.

"These figures indicate that the manufacturing recovery could be teetering on the brink of collapse," said Dharshini David, economist at HSBC Markets.

Analysts said the fall in factory output was due to the twin impact of the strong pound, which makes British exports less competitive in world markets, and weakening demand from Asia.

> 'These figures indicate that the manufacturing recovery could be teetering on the brink of collapse'

Separate figures from the British Retail Consortium showing a last-minute rush to the shops in the run up to Christmas and an upbeat start to the New Year sales emphasised that there is still life left in the UK consumer.

But most analysts said the lagged effects of the strength of the pound, past tax and interest rate rises, and the crisis in Asia would cause a sharp slowdown in economic growth during 1998.

Michael Saunders, at Salomon Smith Barney, the US investment bank, said the UK was set for a bumpy landing with growth of the gross domestic product set to fall from 3.5 per cent last year to just 1.5 per cent in 1998.

"Our view is decidedly downbeat versus the consensus, which sees a more modest slowdown in growth to 2.5 per cent," said Mr Saunders.

One of the main reasons for growing pessimism about the outlook for the UK economy is the Asian downturn, where worries over the Indonesian economy and the demise of one of the region's top banks, Peregrine Investment Holdings in Hong Kong, yesterday sparked renewed turbulence on world stock markets.

The Singapore and Hong Kong stock markets fell by more than eight per cent overnight while more than £20 billion was wiped off the value of the London market at one point as the FTSE 100 index plunged almost 150 points.

The New York market looked set to follow suit in early dealings as the Dow Jones industrial average fell more than 130 points but it then rallied and was 50 points up by lunchtime. The swift change helped sentiment in Europe with the FTSE recovering some of the lost ground to close down 69.5 points at 5068.8.

Until recently, the consensus in the City was that UK interest rates, which have been increased five times since May, were set to rise at least once more to slow growth and ensure the Government hits its 2.5 per cent inflation target.

> 'Futures markets have gone ballistic. People have woken up to the fact that Asia exists'

Indeed, some economists say risks remain that rising pay deals will force a final hike in February.

But most agree that the economy has probably reached a turning point and that monetary policy will now be directed towards preventing a slowdown in growth from becoming a recession rather than halting a 1980s-style boom.

That change in stance may be signalled by the Bank of England's next inflation report, due out in February, if data before then confirm that a slowdown in growth is underway.

Key figures published this week include inflation, today and unemployment and average earnings tomorrow.



The midday close of the Hang Seng index in Hong Kong yesterday after tumbling 11 per cent

PHOTOGRAPH: VINCENT YU

Bosses share pain with pay cut

Roger Cowe

WHEN the eight directors of struggling upmarket company Mulberry realised they would have to start sacking staff, they decided they must also share the pain.

In traditional Japanese style, the board members took personal responsibility and voted themselves a 12 per cent pay cut, a move unprecedented among the country's public companies. The measure will save £84,000 on the total £700,000 a year bill.

The action will send a shiver through Britain's boardrooms, where salaries generally move in only one direction, and where failure is often rewarded with a huge payoff.

The former chief executive of Laura Ashley, Ann Iverson, earned £1.1 million in 1996 and pocketed a further £450,000 when she was sacked recently after losses mounted.

Mulberry has been hit hard by the effect of the strong pound which has knocked overseas sales, while the UK market has suffered from the drop in tourism, especially as a result of the Asian crisis.

Roger Saul, founder and chairman of the group which rivals Louis Vuitton and Gucci in leather accessories, clothing and household furnishings, believes the people in charge of the company should take responsibility for its predicament and share the pain inflicted on its employees.

The man who began the business making upmarket leather handbags and accessories in deepest Somerset explained: "We built this team up from nothing. Coming out of a private company background, I have always believed we should lead from the front."

The 12 per cent average pay cut will hit top earners like him (£210,000 last year), more than the less well-paid directors, such as his wife Marion (on £75,000).

Other staff will suffer a pay freeze until April next year, while redundancies have been made in an attempt to cut overheads.

Mr Saul said the company's finances remained adequate, and it was still growing — just not as fast as the 25 per cent per annum it has been used to.

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Please send me_____ Guardian International umbrella/s at £19.50; cost £_____ I enclose a cheque/ money order for the sum of £_____ or please debit my Visa/ Mastercard account.

Card No:

Expiry date:

Signature_____

Name:

Address:

Postcode: Country:

Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

Tina Turner fan to run Royal Opera

EMI crisis-manager takes reins at troubled Covent Garden

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

SIR Colin Southgate, a Tina Turner fan, was last night confirmed as the chairman of the Royal Opera House, replacing Lord Chadlington who resigned last month in the wake of a scathing report from a Commons select committee.

Sir Colin, aged 59, is the chairman of EMI, with a salary of £800,000. It is understood his appointment was approved last week by the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith.

The board of the ROH, which has the formal power of appointment, is understood to have agreed with Mr Smith's suggestion at a meeting last night. The Department of Culture must give final approval before a formal announcement today.

The appointment of Sir Colin, who impressed Mr Smith with his crisis-management at EMI, marks a break with tradition. While previous ROH chairmen have been opera insiders — Lord Chadlington was a life-long operagoer — Sir Colin is not known for his love of opera.

Indeed, his musical tastes are more plebeian. A picture of Tina Turner, whom he describes as his "favourite lady", hangs on his office wall at EMI. Other musical tastes include Fats Waller and Ella Fitzgerald. His favourite music, however, is Mozart.

He is credited with turning around EMI at a time of poor overseas sales. He oversaw the de-merger of Thorn EMI, and his seven years at the company have seen £5 billion in profit from Britpop, with acts such as Blur and Radiohead, and Girl Power. Sir Colin is credited with signing the Spice Girls, whom he described as "sex on 10 legs". In return they dubbed him "very, very posh Spice".



Sir Colin Southgate: Blairite and champion of Britpop

Sir Colin is understood to have been seeking a more public role. He was on the shortlist for the chairmanship of NatWest, and unsuccessfully sought the chairmanship of Channel 4. He also offered to be an international ambassador for Tony Blair.

Described as an outspoken *political iconoclast*, he is an adviser to the Bank of England and a non-executive director of PowerGen, where he has hit out at "back-patting executive pay deals". He was himself criticised in 1993 for accepting a £230,000 bonus from Thorn EMI and a 13 per cent pay rise.

He faces a stern challenge at the ROH. The select committee report capped a year which saw Covent Garden close for a controversial £213 million refurbishment.

Partly because of poor ticket sales and management and accounting procedures, the ROH's deficit is expected to reach £7.7 million by the end of the financial year.

Gerald Kaufman, the chair of the Culture select committee, welcomed the appointment. "We didn't say the new chairman necessarily had to be a philistine, but he sounds as if he is capable of doing the job," he said.



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The way it was . . . the post-war era was the heyday of the door-to-door salesman of encyclopaedias or anything else

Hi-tech slams the door on old-time salesmen

Emily Sheffield on the changing status of the Encyclopaedia Britannica

EVERY week for the past three years, Tony Amadi has had the thankless task of trying to coax passers-by in London's Heathrow Airport to spend thousands of pounds on the leather bound Encyclopaedia Britannica.

He has stood in a tradition going back generations. His predecessors, however, trudged the streets, knocking on doors, wangling their way into people's homes to convince them of the benefits of knowledge and a monthly payment plan.

But in two months' time Mr Amadi and 70 other direct salesmen — all paid commission only — will pack up their heavy tomes for the last time. Yesterday Encyclopaedia Britannica International announced it will close its home sales force in the UK by April.

Worldwide sales of the 32-volume printed edition have plummeted 85 per cent since the early 1990s as people switched to works on CD-rom and the Internet.

Now the 60 kg set, first published by the Scottish-based company in 1768, will become a secondary product as the company replaces face-to-face sales strategy with mail shots and direct marketing of the CD-rom and Britannica Online.

Encyclopaedia Britannica CD-roms sell for £125, compared to £645-£3,000 for the book version. Internet users can subscribe for £7.99 a month and get the benefit of instant updates.

Tim Pethick, Encyclopaedia Britannica's vice-president, said yesterday: "We haven't nurtured the brand as we should, and unfortunately when people think of encyclopaedias they still think of pushy door-to-door sales people.

"That's one of the contributory factors to the decision to get out of direct selling. It has been a painful decision."

Doorstep selling — of products including vacuum cleaners and double glazing as well encyclopedias — reached its height in the post-war period. But methods were discredited when salesmen's techniques, such as gaining entry on the pretence of carrying out market research, were exposed.

"We have to respond to fundamental changes in consumer buying patterns," said Mr Pethick.

"In-home selling served us very well for many years, but today our customers want to buy in other ways. The revenues generated from in-home sales efforts no longer justifies the cost."

But for Mr Amadi, who has been selling the encyclopaedias for 11 years, it is the end of an era. "It is a very sad day for all of us," he said. "We guessed it was coming, technology was inevitably going to push us and books aside. But I do not think anything can replace the one-to-one service we've supplied."

His five children had been brought up on the world-famous volumes, and for them the CD-rom would never be better than the book. "It is more relaxing to sit in a chair and work your way through the beautifully illustrated pages. Some children do not want to be in front of a computer all day."

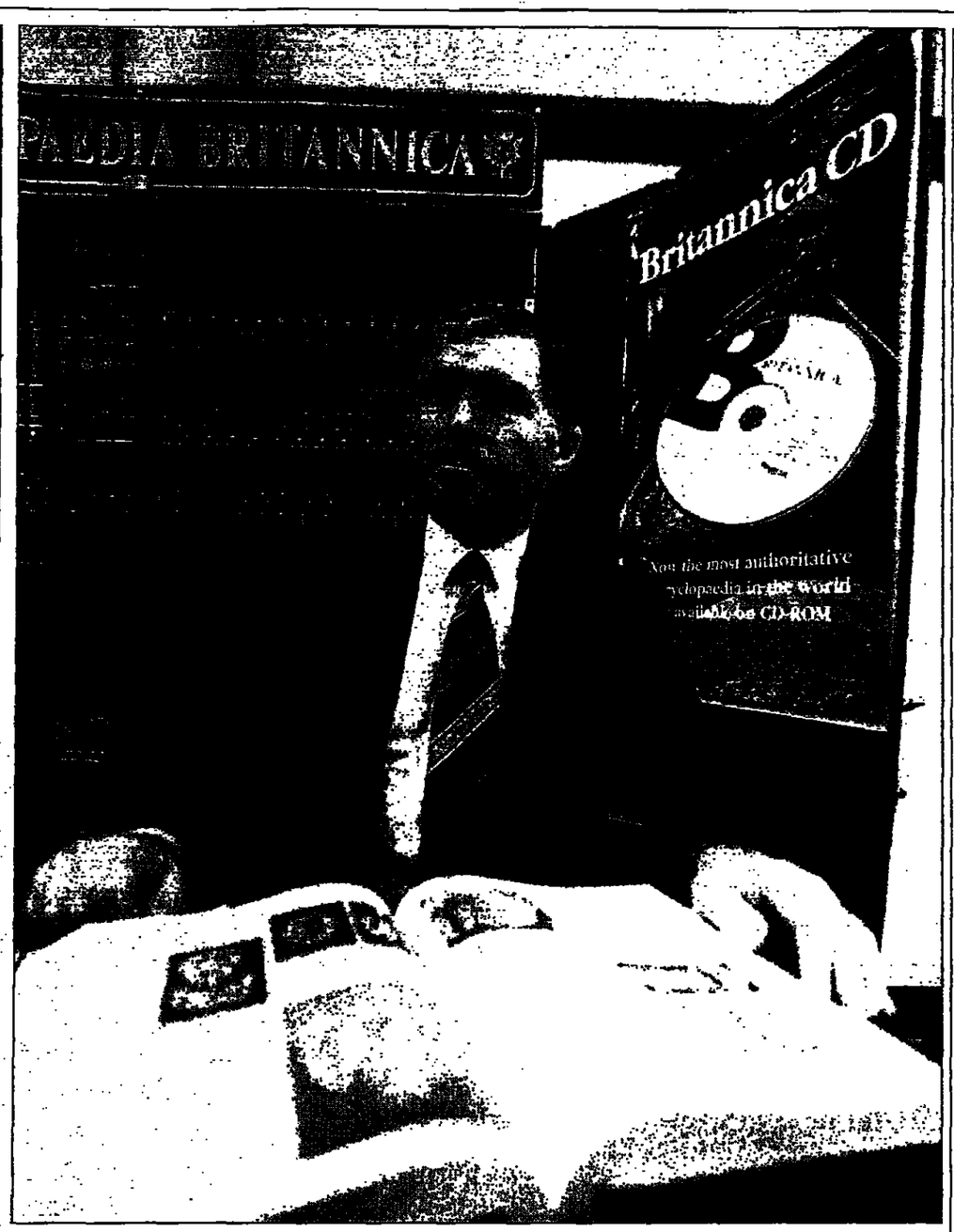
But few at Heathrow gave the stall a second glance — and still fewer bothered to stop and buy. Jully Dicken, who works in promotions, said she would only ever consider buying the CD. "I think it's sad that books are slowly being replaced by modern technology but traditions fade like everything else in life."

Stephen Brady, 31, an engineer, said: "I'm not at all interested in the books. They're too expensive, take up far too much space and as I travel a lot and can't possibly carry 32 volumes. I have to have the CD."

Ken Jackson, an environmental safety worker, bought a CD-rom. "I was never able to afford the encyclopedia as a child," he said. "Now I can update my CDs cheaply every year."

Mr Amadi will now start looking for a new job.

"Due to drops in sales I have been earning less and less money. But even though I might get a better paid job, nothing can replace the attachment I have to these volumes."



Facing a new era . . . area manager Dave Ritchie at the Encyclopaedia Britannica Heathrow stall PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEAVER

'We haven't nurtured the brand as we should, and unfortunately when people think of encyclopaedias they still think of pushy door-to-door sales people'

Tim Pethick, vice-president

Comparing knowledge

Britannica CD	CD-rom Encyclopaedia
Number of CDs: 1	No of CDs: 2
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PoWs spurn 'insulting' Japanese apology

Ewen MacAskill in Tokyo and Christopher Elliott

AN APOLOGY by the Japanese government for the country's treatment of British prisoners of war was described as "insulting" by veterans last night, stumping Tony Blair's attempts to draw a line under bitterness stemming from the second world war and begin a new relationship with Tokyo.

A promise of a fresh £125,000 to fund reconciliation between the two countries, and "an expression of deep remorse and heartfelt apology" by the Japanese prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, were not enough for veterans to call off plans to take their case to court in Tokyo next month. They are seeking £13,000 for each prisoner for the trauma they suffered.

Mr Blair, who discussed the detail with Mr Hashimoto for 15 minutes yesterday, hailed the Japanese moves as a "very significant step forward".

But Martin Day, a lawyer for the Japanese Prisoners of War and Internees Association, which represents more than 12,000 men, called them "an insult". He said: "At a time when Germany is still paying billions of deutschmarks in compensation to survivors of the Holocaust, these offers are not enough."

He also warned that the planned visit to Britain in May by Japan's Emperor Akihito could prove "uncomfortable".

Arthur Titherington, the chairman of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors' Association which represents more than 12,000 veterans and internees, also described the extra money as an insult. He said he could not prevent his members from protesting when the emperor and empress visit Britain — an embarrassment the Japanese government is desperate to avoid.

On the last state visit, by Emperor Akihito's father in 1971, the British public expressed their disgust at the failure of Emperor Hirohito or his government to issue an apology by standing in silence as he travelled through the streets in a carriage with the Queen.

Mr Hashimoto said in a statement that Tokyo "expressed feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology to the people who suffered in the second world war. We understand the suffering of the British people."

The wording is almost identical to the apology given on the 50th anniversary of V-J Day by the then prime minister, Tomiichi Murayama. But this time Mr Hashimoto said the entire cabinet supported it.

He added that the £500,000 a year it spends on Britain as part of its Peace and Reconciliation Fund will be increased to £625,000. The extra money will fund joint visits by former British and Japanese servicemen to cemeteries in Asia; one-year scholarships in Japan for the grandchildren of PoWs; and the doubling of visits to Japan to 100 a year of former PoWs and their grandchildren.

The German government has paid up to £35 billion to victims of the Holocaust. Those in receipt of a pension from Bonn may receive up to £800 a month. Germany yesterday agreed to establish a fund to compensate the Nazis' Jewish victims in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. They may receive up to £90 a month.

The estimated 140,000 British and Commonwealth citizens taken prisoner by the Japanese suffered some of the worst atrocities of the second world war. On their release in 1945, many survivors weighed as little as three or four stone. At least a quarter of prisoners died in captivity.

Leader comment, page 8; Inside story, G2 page 4



Ryutaro Hashimoto: Failed to head off veterans' lawsuit

Straw's son gets police caution

Luke Harding

THE long-running media saga enveloping the Home Secretary Jack Straw was brought to a predictable conclusion last night when his son William was cautioned by police.

Scotland Yard said William, aged 17, received the caution following allegations he had supplied cannabis to a Mirror reporter. He earlier attended Kennington police station, in south London, with his father.

A police spokesman said no further action would be taken against Mirror reporter Dawn Alford, who was arrested by police after she bought 1.92 grammes of cannabis resin from the teenager.

Mr Straw, who appears to have emerged politically undamaged, last night appealed to the media to show continued restraint in covering the case. "William is learning the lessons of this episode and he of course has my support in doing so," he said.

"I am grateful for the restraint shown towards him by most of the media. I hope they will continue to agree he should not suffer additionally simply because he is my son, nor should my family.

"I have no plans to make any further public comment about William."

Daily Mirror editor Piers Morgan was "delighted" that Ms Alford had been "exonerated of any wrong-doing". He said: "It was a scandal that she was arrested simply for doing her job." William Straw had been "rightly cautioned".

The Mirror was last night preparing to publish tape-recordings of the encounter between Ms Alford and the teenager at a south London pub before Christmas in an effort to prove he had not been "coerced into selling drugs against his will", Mr Morgan said.

Mr Straw was identified 12 days ago as the minister involved after a High Court judge lifted the ban on naming his son. The ban had degenerated into a political and legal fiasco.

Unionists back push for peace

continued from page 1

Trimble, the party's leader, said: "There is nothing in this paper which obstructs or constrains the sort of outcome toward which we have been working."

But the war of words on what the document meant was already under way. It is deliberately vague on many areas. John Hume, the SDLP leader, rejected Mr Trimble's assertion that any cross-border bodies would simply be advisory. The SDLP will hold out for executive powers for them.

Sinn Fein said little. But it is opposed to an assembly and to the intergovernmental council.

There are promises in the document to deal with the issues of paramilitary prisoners, security and the RUC. But developments in these areas would have to be radical before Sinn Fein could swallow other elements.

Mitchel McLaughlin, Sinn Fein chairman, refused to deliver a "knee-jerk response". He warned that "any dilution by the two governments of the Framework Document would be, and would be seen to be, the result of Unionist and loyalist pressure."

He feared that the recent terror campaign had brought dividends to the Unionists.

He added: "The recent murders have been quite cynically manipulated by the Unionist political leadership to intimidate both the Government and the nationalist community."

Under the so-called sufficiency of consent rules, Sinn Fein's agreement is not necessary to a deal. Representatives speaking for a majority of either community had to agree.

That means the Ulster Unionists, with just under 50 per cent of the Unionist vote, need one or other of the fringe loyalist parties to speak for Unionists, while the SDLP, with the overwhelming nationalist vote, can speak alone for that constituency. The key will be whether the SDLP is now prepared to deal without Sinn Fein.

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The Guardian Tuesday January 13 1998

John Mullin finds the taste of fudge, with a distinctly Orange flavour and discomfort for all, in the quest for peace in Northern Ireland

Everyone's a winner, bar Sinn Fein

IN THE Stormont Hotel, down the long hill from the seat of government in Northern Ireland, there is a stand offering free postcards. The most striking is a two-headed cow, like the Push-Me-Pull-You beast in Dr Dolittle. It seemed the perfect metaphor for yesterday's blueprint towards a settlement.

Both the main players, the Ulster Unionists and the nationalist SDLP, were busy outside Castle Buildings as the British and Irish governments were presenting the document to the eight participating parties inside. They were seeking to put their own gloss on it. But they were agreed: the paper, a product of frantic telephone conversations between Tony Blair in Toyko and Bertie Ahern in Dublin, was a fudge.

It had to be. It provides something for everyone except Sinn Fein, and discomfort to all. As one government official said: "It is a bone for the parties to gnaw on, designed to concentrate minds and get negotiations going in earnest."

There is, though, little doubt it is a more Orange document than the Framework Document, published in February 1995 as the basis for negotiations. The leaders' reaction told the tale.

David Trimble, Ulster Unionist leader, grinning widely, indicated he was a little less than 90 per cent happy with it. The SDLP welcomed it as the basis for talks, though John Hume was even more hang-dog than usual. And Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams was long gone.

The document runs to little more than one A4 page. It first provides for "balanced constitutional change". The Irish government will amend its constitution to take out articles two and three, which lay territorial claim to Northern Ireland. The British, in return, will delete from the Government of Ireland Act 1920 references to the sovereign territory of Northern Ireland. Not too many problems there.

There will be a Northern Ireland assembly, elected by a system of proportional representation, with executive and legislative functions. It will have at least six departments, likely to include agriculture, economic development, education, environment, health and tourism.

The assembly comes under strand one of the multi-party talks, that area which deals with an internal settlement. Sinn Fein, with its all-Ireland analysis, is the only party opposed. But depending on what happens elsewhere, it could be persuaded to buy into it.

Strands two and three, which deal with north-south relations and east and west links, are dovetailed in the new document when it calls for a new British-Irish agreement. It is the most important area of the fudge.

It is the growing importance given to the latter which pleases Unionists most. They have long argued for what it calls a Council of the British Isles, or intergovernmental council, as the document describes it. They wanted that to replace the detested Anglo-Irish agreement, seen as a one-way street for Dublin interference in Northern Ireland.

Now they regard the intergovernmental council as a way of downgrading the importance of strand two, the vexed issue of cross-border bodies. Nationalists demand that these have executive powers; the Unionists are vehemently opposed to that. Under Unionist analysis, the more crucial strand three becomes, and it is more important in yesterday's paper than in the Framework Document, the less important are those north-south bodies.

According to yesterday's document, the intergovernmental council will "deal with the totality of relationships". It will include representatives of the British and Irish governements and from the devolved assemblies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It will meet twice a year at summit level.

To Unionists, this is the umbrella organisation under which everything else operates. It would prefer it to have no executive responsibilities because that in turn makes it more difficult for the north-south bodies to have them. It wants a standing administrative body, and regular meetings at sub-committee level.

To the SDLP, the intergovernmental council is a sideshow, a sop, a smokescreen. One source said: "No way will we sign up to something which gives the intergovernmental council many powers." It believes the north-south bodies are where the action is at, but is prepared for there to be some sort of strand three body. "As long as its simply a twice a year dinner date," said another.

The crucial players are the Ulster Unionists and the SDLP. Any deal will have to be something each can live with.

That points to cross-border bodies with executive powers, which the Unionists, although they could never admit it now, may be able to live with if they get an intergovernmental council they can sell to their supporters as being even more important. It will, as always, come down to the wording.

The text in full

The full text of the blueprint for the Northern Ireland talks reads:

Propositions on heads of agreement:

Balanced constitutional change, based on commitment to the principle of consent in all its aspects by both British and Irish governments, to include both changes to the Irish constitution and to British constitutional legislation.

Democratically elected institutions in Northern Ireland, to include a Northern Ireland assembly, elected by a system of proportional representation, exercising devolved executive and legislative responsibility over at least the responsibilities of the six Northern Ireland departments, and with provisions to ensure that all sections of the community can participate and work together successfully in the operation of these institutions and that all sections of the community are protected.

A new British-Irish agreement, to replace the existing Anglo-Irish Agreement and help establish close co-operation and enhance relationships, embracing:

□ An intergovernmental council to deal with the totality of relationships, to include representatives of the British and Irish governments, the Northern Ireland administration and the devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales, with meetings twice a year at summit level.

□A North/South ministerial council to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government in particular areas.

Each side will consult, co-operate and take decisions on matters of mutual interest within the mandate of, and accountable to, the Northern Ireland assembly and the Oireachtas [national parliament] respectively. All decisions will be by agreement between the two sides, North and South.

□Suitable implementation bodies and mechanisms for policies agreed by the North-/South council in meaningful areas and at an all-island level.

□Standing intergovernmental machinery between the Irish and British governments, covering issues of mutual interest, including non-devolved issues for Northern Ireland, when representatives of the Northern Ireland administration would be involved.

Provision to safeguard the rights of both communities in Northern Ireland, through arrangements for the comprehensive protection of fundamental human, civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, including a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland supplementing the provisions of the European Convention, and to achieve full respect for the principles of equity of treatment and freedom from discrimination, and the cultural identity and ethos of both communities. Appropriate steps to ensure an equivalent level of protection in the Irish republic.

Effective and practical measures to establish and consolidate an acceptable peaceful society, dealing with issues such as prisoners, security in all its aspects, policing and decommissioning of weapons.

Plan to convert part of London park heads list of ideas to mark memory of Diana





Michael White on a welter of choices

Conversion of the gardens outside Kensington Palace, left, is backed by the committee led by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and including Diana's sister, Lady Sarah McCorquodale MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

THE Government's official committee appointed to pick suitable memorials to Diana, Princess of Wales, from the 10,000 ideas submitted since her death last August, yesterday agreed to endorse controversial plans for a designated garden outside her last home at Kensington Palace.

The committee, which met at No 11 Downing Street under the chairmanship of the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, also signalled support for "giving some recognition to community service, particularly by young people", Mr Brown told reporters after a 90-minute meeting.

But calls for an official statue look certain to be ruled out at this stage. The history of such monuments is littered with mishaps when they have been commissioned in a wave of emotional feeling too soon after a famous death.

No firm decisions have yet been taken and members of the 10-strong committee — which includes the princess's sister, Lady Sarah McCorquodale — are anxious not to rule out too quickly ideas submitted by members of the public whose response to their heroine's death produced the most heartfelt scenes of national grief since the second world war.

Private individuals, schools and community groups, as well as churches and voluntary bodies around the world — have submitted proposals to commemorate and continue Diana's work.

By far the most conspicuous — backed by the Royal Parks Agency — was a £10 million scheme to transform part of Kensington Gardens in central London into a memorial park — though a "Diana Medal" for compassionate community service is also likely.

But the prospect of adapting the late 17th-century gardens has aroused local and heritage groups to warn that it could prove "a recipe for disaster" — not least because it may have to stand up to year-round public attention.

Rival designs are still under scrutiny, and a visitors' centre, which looks likely, might help funnel the flow of well-wishers into more manageable form, Whitehall sources suggest.

Other proposals from the public have been for hospitals or a network of hospices across the country, bearing Princess Diana's name. Renaming the Severn Crossing or Heathrow and giving her name to a new footbridge across the Thames between Westminster Bridge and Waterloo Bridge have also been put forward. One or other is likely to bear fruit.

Ministers do not rule out renaming an existing national public holiday "Diana Day" though they seem wary of creating a new one for her birthday, July 1, which is seen as impractical.

Public support exists for Diana's head to appear on bank notes and a special issue of coins — though sale of her memorial issue of stamps was held up until recently, a sign of delicate feelings, and copyright issues.

The Treasury has confirmed that, whichever memorial is finally recommended to the Government by the committee, no money for it will be drawn from the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, which is separate from the memorial committee. *It stands at £35 million, including £20 million from sales of Elton John's remake of Candle in the Wind, the song he sang at the princess's funeral.* Funds will be forwarded to the princess's favourite causes.

In memoriam

Likely memorials:

A Diana garden outside Kensington Palace
A Diana medal for community service
A Diana day
A Diana hospital

Unlikely memorials

A Diana airport
A Diana statue
A Diana £10 note
A Diana bridge

EU takes step towards easing of beef ban

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE first step towards a partial lifting of the 22-month ban on British beef exports looks likely in Strasbourg tomorrow, when the European Commission is expected to accept the Government's case that cattle with computerised records should be eligible for sale abroad.

The lifting of the ban on certified herds — cattle free of contact with BSE-infected animals for at least eight years — has been the first aim of both Conservative and Labour ministers since the beef ban was imposed in March 1996.

But the commission's proposal may lead to a further battle with other member states. It will have to be approved this month by a committee of chief veterinary officials of all 15 states — who have already shown how vulnerable they are to political pressure from their governments. It will then almost certainly have to go to the council of EU agriculture ministers. But officials in Brussels last night were predicting that the commission would be prepared to force through its proposal over ministerial heads if necessary. It is still likely to take several months.

Last night one British diplomat said: "We are very pleased with the commission's proposal, but it is only the first step."

It would apply initially only to cattle from Northern Ireland, the only region to have kept computerised records for long enough. That may antagonise Scottish farmers, who claim their beef has been just as BSE-free, even if computer records do not yet establish this to the EU's satisfaction. Computer records in the rest of the country have been kept only for cattle born since August 1, 1996.

Britain hopes the next stages will be lifting the ban on data-based animals with full records of their health, and then on the export of cattle embryos. Officials accept that an end to the ban is still years away.

In a further move to relieve pressure on farmers abroad tomorrow, the 20 commissioners are likely to recommend a £400 million, 10-year aid package to Caribbean banana producers hit by a World Trade Organisation ruling last September that they should no longer receive preferential access to EU markets.

The EU has been forced to dismantle its licensing arrangements under which banana growers from the Caribbean and African states were effectively guaranteed a market, even though their fruit is more expensive to produce.

The WTO ruling followed pressure from the US and a number of Latin American states in a case brought at the behest of the American multinational Chiquita, which controls much of the production in central America.

Caribbean states say their farmers cannot compete with the big plantations, which already supply 70 per cent of the European market.

Opera promoter denies summer strains of Strauss were strident

Sarah Hall

FOR opera buffs, the Glyndebourne-style festival at the Jacobean manor offered the perfect entertainment for a summer's evening outdoors.

But for villagers in South End, Oxfordshire, the strains from the grounds of Garsington Manor proved less than delightful.

Indeed, Richard Strauss' Die Aegyptische Helena was so loud it drowned out the sounds of their televisions. Others complained they had to stay indoors.

Yesterday, Leonard Ingrams, the merchant banker brother of the former Private Eye editor, Richard Ingrams, appeared before Thame magistrates, Oxfordshire, facing his second prosecution for breaching noise levels. In 1994, he was fined £1,000 for noise pollution. The conviction was quashed on appeal.

The court heard yesterday that he broke his public entertainment licence with two performances of the work on June 24 and July 6 1997. On both occasions, the noise from the Garsington Opera Company players reached 48 and 50 decibels.

Resident Peter Roger, told the court the noise kept him indoors. "I was inside the house watching the television with the windows closed and I could still clearly hear the great crescendo and noise."

Neighbour Paul Hunter said the noise of July 6 was unforgettable and it had forced him to increase the volume on his television. "We might well have wanted to eat outside. If we had sat outside we could have heard most of the opera," he said.

Data collected by environmental health officials at nearby homes during the performances confirmed the music was too loud.

Ingrams, who agreed to set levels after a public inquiry between 1996 and 1997, denies two charges of failing to ensure noise such as to cause an unreasonable disturbance to persons in the neighbourhood did not emanate from his premises.

The case continues.

'Respectable' pair jailed for cocaine smuggling

David Ward

A "RESPECTABLE suburban" husband and wife were jailed for smuggling cocaine yesterday despite never having been caught in possession of significant quantities of the drug.

Convictions in such cases are extremely rare and Customs and Excise investigators likened the case to a killer convicted of murder where no body is found.

Ronald and Sylvia Benn, both aged 40, were said to have bought expensive cars, hired a butler and turned their home in Rochdale, Greater Manchester, into a palace with profits from their part in a £500,000 international narcotics racket.

Investigators using a procedure known as Condor found traces of cocaine in their vacuum cleaner and on bank notes retrieved from a hoard of cash uncovered in their BMW as they prepared to board a ferry for Holland.

The banknote evidence was enough to convict them at a week-long trial at Manchester crown court last year and yesterday Benn was sentenced to nine years and his wife to six.

Investigators used a "shake and vac" method in which banknotes are shaken over a foil sheet, with drug traces then swept up with a miniature vacuum cleaner.

The Benns were stopped by Customs as they set off on their 17th trip to Holland in less than 18 months. More than £63,000 in cash was found in the boot of their car.

Judge Anthony Hammond was told that in a few months the couple had settled debts of £30,000, paid off part of their mortgage, begun taking holidays in expensive foreign hotels and bought shares in two Blackpool hotels.

Mr Benn bought his wife a red Mercedes convertible sports car as a birthday present and they built an underground garage. A local man wasemployed as butler.

The Benns often took their two teenage daughters with them on their trips to Holland to allay suspicion but their regular journeys and extravagant lifestyle attracted Customs officers' attention.

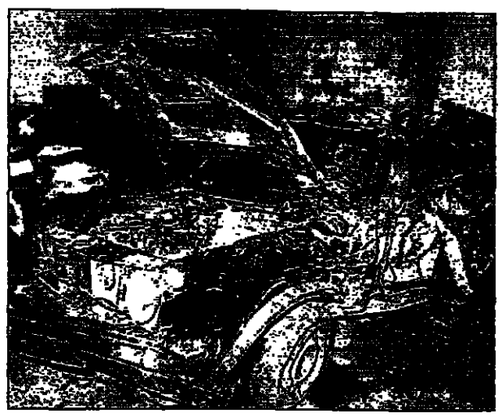
The judge said the smuggling operation had been designed to net profits of more than £500,000 and it was estimated more than £160,000 could have passed through the couple's hands.

He said: "I will not read each of you a lecture about the evil of drugs. It is well known and well documented. Serious sentences are called for for these offences."

Stephen Riorden QC, for Ronald Benn, who has a previous conviction for drugs possession, said he had become involved in something that was not in his nature. David Fish QC, representing Mrs Benn, said the case was a tragedy for her.

Neighbours said the Benns had appeared to be like any other family. One said: "There was nothing out of the ordinary about them. But we did notice new cars and that Mrs Benn started doing her shopping in a taxi."

هكذا من الاصل



The Volkswagen car in which John Were lost control and hit a tree while drunk, killing two friends last July

Parents forgive killer drink driver

Ruaridh Nicoll

A CAMBRIDGE student who killed two friends in a drunken car crash last July yesterday left court a free man after a plea for clemency from one of the victims' parents.

John Were, aged 21, from Newbury, Berkshire, drove away from a 21st birthday party in Goring Heath, Oxfordshire, with five friends. He crashed into a tree, killing Jonathan Sage, aged 21, and Lisa Cohen, aged 19.

In court, David Sage, Jonathan's father, said he harboured "no feelings of retribution" even though Were was three times over the legal limit. He believed the tragic journey had been a group decision and that Were's life *should not be ruined further.*

"I know in my heart that my son had some degree of responsibility for what happened and I would not like to see John go to prison," he said. "I feel quite clearly that I would like to help John if it was possible for him to return to some degree of normal life."

As Mr Were left, he said: "I thought I was going to prison. I am very relieved."

Judge Charles Harris, sitting at Oxford crown court, was told by Ross Elder, one of the young men in the car, that Mr Were had been bullied into driving. "There was a feeling we were going to go whether John drove or not," he said. "I remember him saying finally 'If anyone's going to drive my car, it's me'."

The five friends, who had been educated at Radley public school, jumped into the Volkswagen Golf where they were joined by Ms Cohen, who sat on the front passenger's knee.

The car came over a slight rise and then met a bend where Mr Were lost control and hit a tree. Ms Cohen and Mr Sage were thrown from the car and killed instantly.

A local resident, who was called to the crash site, found Mr Were trying to revive Ms Cohen. He said the student turned to him and cried: "These are my friends. Look what I have done. I have killed them."

Despite the circumstances Graham Buxton, co-founder of the Campaign Against Drink Driving, yesterday hit out at the 18-month suspended sentence passed by Judge Harris. "The sentence should be a deterrent," he said. "This sends out the wrong message. Anyone that had got in [Mr Were's] way that night would have suffered the consequences."



John Were outside court with his sister Anna. He was described by the judge as 'an exceptionally fine young man'

Judge Harris said he had considered this. "It is an easy course to reflect the view 'you drank, you drove, you were careless and so must go to prison'," he told Mr Were. "It would be quite easy for a court to take this view but many people will acknowledge that to add to the lifelong anguish and to suffer jail as well may be to pile on punishment."

The judge applauded Mr Were on his actions after the accident. "You are a young man of merit and talent and achievement described by a neighbour as an exceptionally fine young man," he said. "Your behaviour [after the crash] was exemplary."

Mr Were, who had been studying English at Trinity College, Cambridge, at the time, was as blunt with the police as he was with the local man. "Yes I have just killed somebody," he said. "I have killed my best friend."

Once at the police station he declined the offer of a solicitor: "I don't feel the need to see a solicitor. What is done is done and nothing is going to change what happened."

Air Vice-Marshal Ronald Elder, Ross's father, also spoke out on Mr Were's behalf. "It is absolutely in character that he should wish to take full responsibility," he told the court.

"This was a peer group decision. John has taken upon himself a burden which he has not as yet, shared with others to the extent perhaps, he ought to."

Mr Were said he was glad it was all over and that he was now looking to the future: "I will be returning to Cambridge for the next academic year."

Duke lambasts destructive EU fishing policy

Poor countries' dwindling stocks bought to prop up ailing industry

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

BRITISH taxpayers are paying millions of pounds in subsidies for Spanish and Portuguese fishermen to travel round the world taking the fish stocks of the poor, the Duke of Edinburgh told a World Wide Fund for Nature press conference yesterday.

Claude Martin, the director general of WWF, said the European Union's fishing policy, which paid out £170 million a year for fishing rights in developing countries, was "totally irresponsible."

He appealed to the British government to use its presidency of the EU to prevent taxpayers subsidising the destruction of world's fish stocks.

Britain was named as one of the countries which had so far failed to ratify the United Nations agreement which is designed to stop overfishing of species such as cod and *tuna. The Straddling Fish* Stocks and Highly Migratory Species agreement was finalised in 1993, but only four of the top 20 fishing nations had found time to ratify it, the Duke of Edinburgh said.

The duke, who is president emeritus of the organisation, said it was not difficult to see why governments were not prepared to ratify it, as it would mean a significant reduction in income and revenue from their fishing industries.

"The dilemma is this; if governments do not implement the terms of the agreement as soon as possible, it's *absolutely certain that there* will be very little for the next generation of fishermen to catch, and not much for the next generations of consumers to eat," he said.

Because of overfishing, European waters could not satisfy the demands of the home market or keep fishing fleets occupied. To solve the problem the EU was buying up rights in other countries for hard cash. This was largely to keep large Spanish and Portuguese fleets in employment.

Michael Sutton, for WWF, said that in 1996, when Morocco closed its waters to EU *fleets, it threw* 8,000 vessels and 20,000 fishermen out of work in Spain and Portugal. The EU spent £30 million paying the Moroccan government to reinstate their fishing rights.

In Senegal, where the EU had also bought local fishing rights, it now took four or five days for native canoes to catch the same number of fish they had once caught in a day. There were examples of the canoes having to go so far off the West African coast to make their catches that the boats were overturned in the wash of the trawlers which were sweeping up the same *fish in their nets.*

The Senegal government had an extra £2 million income a year from selling the fishing rights, but had to buy in food for a population which used to be able to catch its *own from the sea.*

The duke said: "Any delay in taking necessary action will amount to passing a rapidly devaluing buck to future governments. By which time irreparable damage will have been done to one of the world's major renewable food resources."

Edmonds wants inquiry into helicopter death

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

BBC personality Noel Edmonds yesterday pressed for an inquiry into the death of a nine-year-old boy on a helicopter flight for a charity run.

His comments followed a report which explained how Bob Hobson tried to avoid cows in a field near the Queen Mother's childhood home at Glamis Castle, but hit a wire fence, tipped the helicopter on its side and fatally trapped Garry Malley, from *Dundee,* one of the three children aboard.

The report, by the Air Accidents Investigation Branch, said the helicopter's windscreen had misted up as the doors were closed in wet, humid weather, unsighting Mr Hobson. The helicopter was one of three being used to carry children of special needs.

It said that Mr Hobson could not have prevented *the* windscreen from misting, given the equipment available, the wet weather, and the passengers' damp clothing. Aircraft handlers only 30 yards away could barely see the passengers inside the helicopter as it took off.



Garry Malley, 9 . . . trapped under fuselage

The Italian-made Agusta helicopter was being flown for Mr Edmonds's charity, the Airborne Trust, at the Scottish Transport Extravaganza at Glamis Castle, Forfar, last July.

Mr Edmonds said: "The report's findings make horrifying reading." His charity would continue to support the calls of the families involved for a full accident inquiry under Scottish law.

The report said the pilot had been concerned about the weather, but agreed conditions were acceptable to start a planned flying programme. When the misting of the windscreen got so bad, he decided to land in a field.

Four feet from landing, he became aware of cattle. "taxi-hovered" away from them, keeping three to four feet above the ground. He did not see the fence and the helicopter hit it and came to rest on its left side. Garry's body was trapped under *the fuselage.*

Garry's father said later: "We want to know why the pilot took off and why the helicopter was overcrowded. It hasn't sunk in yet, and it won't sink in for me yet for some time."

School pupils to receive free e-mail sites for life

John Carvel
Education Editor

EVERY schoolchild in Britain will be given a free e-mail address to use for the rest of their lives under a deal announced yesterday at the launch of the Government's UK NetYear programme to create a computer-literate *workforce for* the next century.

The British subsidiary of the US Internet service company, Excite Inc, said it would provide electronic postboxes for 10 million pupils and 500,000 teachers by December.

Subsequent generations of schoolchildren would also be eligible for the free service which will allow connections to be made for the price of a *local telephone call from* home, the local library, school, college, workplace or cybercafé to anywhere in the world. The company said the system was "future-proofed" because it would not be affected by equipment upgrades, changes of service provider, or moves to a different school.

Although other firms have recently started offering free e-mail addresses for general subscribers, Excite said its scheme would be tailored for schools to stop pupils receiving unsuitable material. Incoming messages would be limited to those contacted by *the student or mail allowed* through by "gatekeepers" in the school.

The company will try to make a profit by using part of the message screen for advertising. It promised controls acceptable to parents which would exclude sponsorship of alcohol and cigarettes, or violent material.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the provision of e-mail addresses for every pupil was essential if schools were to take full advantage of the opportunities of information technology. It would produce huge benefits for homework, he said.

He accepted the need for advertising to pay for the service. "But there must be a clear code of practice to ensure that pupils are not exploited," he added.

The UK NetYear programme was launched yesterday by Kim Howells, the minister for lifelong learning, using video conferencing facilities to link presentations in London, Belfast, Cardiff and Glasgow with 18 schools across Britain.

News in brief

Community care 'failed' killer

A *SERIES* of errors were made in the care of a mental patient who went on to kill his neighbour, an independent report concluded yesterday. Desmond Ledgester, 26, a schizophrenic, strangled 60-year-old Malcolm Hodgson three months after he was discharged from a psychiatric ward at Halifax general hospital. He was sent to Rampton high security hospital indefinitely.

The report says Mr Hodgson's death could not have been predicted. But it adds that Ledgester, had received a poor standard of care, and vital information about him was not passed from one agency to another.

Calderdale Healthcare NHS Trust's chief executive, Haydn Cook, said it was doing all it could to reduce the risk of such *unpredictable incidents.*

Marjorie Wallace, chief executive of Sane, the mental health charity, said: "Here was a man who for two years was obviously, to all around him, extremely ill, tormented by delusions of persecution . . . Yet staff at the hospital allowed him to leave and when he failed to return discharged him in his absence with no follow-up." And staff failed to contact his family.

Vicious father jailed for life

UNEMPLOYED Tommy Elden, 48, of Horsford, near Norwich, who launched a frenzied knife attack on his daughter and sister-in-law after his wife left him, was yesterday jailed for life. He stabbed his 18-year-old daughter, Laura, 34 times and his sister-in-law, Karen Newman, 59 times when they refused to tell him where his wife was.

Judge David Mellor told Elden, who had admitted two counts of attempted murder, that he should serve at least nine years before being eligible for parole.

Norwich crown court had heard that Mrs Newman, 35, a mother of three, hid a mobile phone and dialled 999 during the ordeal. She and Laura pretended to be dead.

Terror protest at Clegg appeal

A PROTEST by the brother of a terrorist murder victim interrupted the opening of a fresh murder appeal by Paratrooper Lee Clegg at the Northern Ireland Appeal Court in Belfast yesterday.

Before being escorted from court, Roger Dillon, whose brother, Seamus, was shot dead last month by the Loyalist Volunteer Force, shouted: "There is no justice for nationalists — you have to be a policeman or a soldier."

Clegg, 30, of Wakefield, West Yorkshire, was jailed for life for murdering Karen Reilly, 18, a passenger in a stolen car that crashed through a Belfast road block. He lost two appeals but was released after serving just over two years. The case was referred back with new forensic evidence. The hearing continues.

UK film-makers honoured

FRANCE yesterday awarded top honours to five leading British film-makers. Oscar-winning actor Jeremy Irons joined film directors Mike Leigh, Stephen Frears, Peter Greenaway and Mike Radford to be made officer of the order of arts and letters by French culture minister Catherine Trautmann at the French ambassador's London residence.

Six in court after girl's death



SIX teenagers charged with harassment following the death of teenager Kelly Yeomans (right) appeared before magistrates yesterday. The five boys, aged 13 to 17, and one girl, aged 15, spoke only to confirm names and addresses to Derby youth court. They were bailed to reappear on January 27. None can be named for legal reasons.

Kelly, aged 13, was found dead at her home in Allenton, Derby, on September 29 last year, after apparently swallowing an overdose of painkillers. Her family have alleged she was bullied. An inquest has been adjourned.

'Homes for votes' appeal

JOHN Magill, the district auditor, has appealed against the acquittal of one of the former Westminster councillors in the £27 million "homes for votes" gerrymandering scandal. He announced yesterday that he intended to challenge the ruling by three judges that former Tory housing chairman, Peter Hartley, was not guilty of "wilful misconduct" over the sale of council homes so the Tories could keep control of the flagship authority. Shirley Porter and David Weeks, both former council leaders, were found guilty of wilful misconduct. — *David Hencke*

Welsh schools reform

PETER Hain, the Education Minister for Wales, is preparing to break with plans for reforming the school curriculum due to be announced today by David Blunkett, the Education Secretary.

Mr Blunkett will promise more flexibility for primary schools to concentrate on literacy and numeracy, pending a full-scale revision of the national curriculum in 2000. Mr Hain has asked the school curriculum authority for Wales to complete a review of the syllabus by September, giving teachers a year to prepare to change lessons in 1999. He is understood to favour a drastic slimming down of minor subjects. "We are determined to drive through the Government's commitment radically to improve literacy and numeracy," he said yesterday. — *John Carvel*

Blind man drove while drunk

A REGISTERED blind man who drove two miles while drunk before crashing into a parked car escaped prison yesterday. Peter Langley, 40, pleaded guilty at Newton Abbot magistrates court in Devon to driving while nearly two-and-a-half times over the alcohol limit. He was put on probation for two years, banned from driving for three years, and fined £100.

Langley, of Torquay, who is completely blind in one eye and suffers tunnel vision in the other, drove his partner's car two miles across Dawlish at between 10 and 15 miles an hour, said Jackie Ashcroft, prosecuting. "He could only see three or four feet in front of him. Nevertheless, he managed to get to a friend's house before colliding with a parked car."

Advice for duvet lovers

A *TRAINING session on how to put on your duvet cover in 15* seconds is one of a series of courses on "life's irritations" being offered by North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council to tempt adults back into education. The free one-hour lesson is one of a week-long series of Bite Size Courses. Other subjects include how to write a press release and how to choose the correct wine for a dinner party. Spokeswoman Hilary Lynch said: "It has to be something you've always wanted to know how to do that you can learn in an hour."

Hollywood has now reached a point where totally non-Irish characters have to establish some sort of Irishness, subliminal or otherwise in order to register decency in the minds of a US audience.
Harry Thompson on yet another IRA film hero

G2 page 5

News in brief

120 Algerians killed in cinema and mosque

AN ARMED gang attacked two villages near the Algerian capital, slaughtering up to 120 people in a cinema and a mosque, hospital sources and witnesses reported yesterday. The security forces put the number of dead at 103 and said 70 others had been injured, including two soldiers.

Medical sources at hospitals in Algiers said 120 people were killed and 100 injured in the attacks, which took place on Sunday evening in a room used to screen films in Sidi Ahmed and in a mosque in Haouche Sahraoui. — *AP, Algiers.*

Germans try to block euro

FOUR of Germany's leading Euro-sceptics went to the supreme court yesterday to challenge the government's enthusiasm for the single European currency and to try to get the project scrapped.

Three economists, including a former central banker, and a law professor lodged their 352-page complaint with the constitutional court in Karlsruhe four months before the key decisions on who will take part in the euro when it is launched a year from now.

They argue that the economies of would-be participants are not convergent — as required by the Maastricht treaty — and that Germany and other countries will qualify on paper only through "creative accounting".

Convinced that the euro will be weaker than the German mark, they say participation in monetary union will constitute a breach of the constitution, which obliges the government to pursue a policy of monetary stability. — *Ian Traynor, Bonn.*

Election unrest in Montenegro

ABOUT 15,000 people, some waving anti-American banners, protested in the Yugoslav republic of Montenegro yesterday as a US envoy tried to defuse a potentially explosive power struggle.

Tension has increased since Milo Djukanovic won presidential election in October, promising greater autonomy from Serbia. He is due to take office on Thursday. The outgoing president, Momir Bulatovic — an ally of the Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic — rejects the result and has called for protests.

The visiting US envoy, Robert Gelbard, met both men, expressing support for Mr Djukanovic. — *AP, Podgorica.*

Jews from east win payout

THE German government said yesterday it had agreed to establish a fund of 200 million marks (£88 million) to compensate Jewish Nazi victims in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The fund will benefit an estimated 17,000 to 20,000 victims over a four-year period starting next year, the chancellery minister, Friedrich Bohl, said.

Holocaust survivors living in the West after the war received substantial compensation from Bonn; those in the eastern bloc were barred because of cold war politics. — *Reuters, Bonn.*

Chirac calls for ban on cloning

THE French president, Jacques Chirac, yesterday called for an international ban on human cloning, hours before 21 European countries were due to sign an agreement to ban the genetic replication of humans.

Mr Chirac's speech to the European national ethics committee came two days after the United States president, Bill Clinton, criticised a Chicago doctor's announcement that he intended to clone humans as "untested and unsafe and morally unacceptable" and urged the US Congress to outlaw human cloning. — *AP, Paris.*

Canadian named UN deputy

LOUISE Frechette, Canada's deputy defence minister, was yesterday named to the new post of deputy secretary-general of the United Nations, as questions about her possible role in blocking investigations of human rights abuses by Canadian troops in Somalia resurfaced.

Ms Frechette has been criticised for encouraging the Canadian government to shut down an inquiry as it began investigating allegations that top Canadian officials had sought to prevent news of the abuses from becoming public. In the most notorious incident, Canadian commandos tortured to death a Somali teenager. — *Mark Tran, New York.*

Belgian armed robbers strike

ROBBERS shot dead two security guards yesterday in the latest of a series of armed robberies on security vans delivering money to banks in Belgium.

The robbers ambushed the van on the Brussels to Liège motorway. They scattered nails on the road to stop other vehicles and killed the guards in cold blood before escaping. Yesterday's incident, the second in a fortnight, follows a spate of nearly 50 raids two years ago. — *Stephen Bates, Brussels.*

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Iraq renews inspection ban

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

SADDAM Hussein threw down a new challenge to a divided United Nations yesterday, insisting that UN weapons inspections must stop until an American official is removed.

In what promises to be a replay of the crisis that first unfolded last October, the Iraqi leader sought to exploit differences on the Security Council to weaken the UN operation and hasten the end of sanctions.

Baghdad announced it was ordering a halt from today to the work of one Unscom (UN special commission) team because its leader, Scott Ritter, was a CIA agent. The US denies the charge.

Iraq has long complained of the "imbalance" of the UN teams — Mr Ritter's includes eight other Americans, five Britons, a Russian and an Australian — but the US and Britain insist this is no business of President Saddam's and that staff are chosen for their technical expertise.

"We would expect the Security Council to very quickly review this latest Iraqi outrage and make clear that Iraq must reverse its position," said a senior US official.

British diplomats, speaking for both the UK and the European Union, expressed "grave concern" at the new threat.

William Cohen, the US defence secretary, vowed not to reduce the military force in the Gulf, including two aircraft carriers, until Iraq fully complied with the arms inspections. The British Defence Secretary, George Robertson, told MPs that UK forces would remain on alert.

"A country that has already used these dreadful instruments of war — chemical and biological weapons — and which continues to deceive and to hide its capabilities for the future is not one that can be trusted," he said.

Despite these words, neither country has any appetite for military action, since it would not be supported by anyone else. Nor would it do anything but play into President Saddam's hands.

The latest row comes a week before a visit to Iraq by the Unscom chief, Richard Butler, an Australian, to solve outstanding issues related to access to sensitive sites like presidential palaces.

Unscom, the world's most intrusive arms-monitoring operation, was forced on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Sanctions cannot be lifted until the Security Council accepts that Iraqi weapons programmes have been halted.

Iraq maintains that it has fulfilled the UN requirements, but the inspectors have repeatedly accused Baghdad of hiding weapons and manufacturing plant.

Mr Ritter, a Gulf war veteran of the US marine corps, has been involved in so-called concealment investigations — a frequent source of friction.

Of the 44 personnel on the Unscom teams, about half are American and British, but 17 nationalities are involved. The UN said more countries could be represented if more resources became available.

Officials had long accepted that a new stand-off was only a matter of time, after deft Russian diplomacy got all sides off the hook last November.

Since then President Saddam has failed to make any progress towards ending sanctions, but germ-warfare substances thought to have been removed by his security officers has not been found while Unscom's work has been deeply compromised.

Iraqi spokesmen have announced that more sites will be banned to the inspectors, apparently confident that any American military threat is unrealistic.

France tries to revive fading spirit of Zola

Jon Henley in Paris

HANGING from the facade of the National Assembly, a giant copy reminds anyone who does not already know that today is the centenary of the most famous front page ever published in France.

The 1,600 sq ft facsimile, unfurled this weekend, is part of an avalanche of commemorative events in honour of "J'accuse", Emile Zola's thundering broadside against anti-Semitism and injustice.

"It is not an episode from the past, however powerful, that we are celebrating, but something that was and will remain a big event for the French republic," said Catherine Trautmann, the culture minister, opening a display of the author's 35-page manuscript at the new National Library.

But the centenary is also prompting reminders that the Dreyfus affair's essential themes — nationalism, xenophobia, the establishment cover-up, the role of the intellectual — remain contemporary French concerns.

President Jacques Chirac wrote to the families of Alfred Dreyfus, the Jewish army captain falsely accused of spying for the Germans, and of Zola, who defended him. He called the affair a "dark spot" on France's history.

The wartime Nazi-friendly Vichy regime — currently on trial in the person of Maurice Papon, accused of ordering the deportation of 1,500 Jews — again showed that "forces of obscurantism, intolerance and injustice" could take over the state, Mr Chirac said.

Seven new books on the subject, including previously unpublished diaries and court transcripts, appear this month. There are five TV programmes and every newspaper has carried a supplement. A plaque was unveiled yesterday outside the house at 21 bis, rue de Bruxelles, where the novelist lived.

J'Accuse, a vitriolic and brilliantly argued piece, accused the military of covering up a gross miscarriage of justice. It was published in the daily L'Aurore two days after a military court acquitted the true culprit, Major Ferdinand Esterhazy, after a sitting that lasted three minutes.

The newspaper published 300,000 copies — 10 times the normal print run — which sold out in hours. The Catholic and nationalist press railed against Zola, the son of Venetian immigrants, saying he had "ceased to be French — if he ever was — and become Jewish", that he was "living ordure", that "France, let it be cried out loud, is for the French".

The Catholic daily La Croix yesterday apologised for its ferociously anti-Semitic editorials about the affair, saying it had betrayed its Christian beliefs by writing "Down with the Jews!" and describing Dreyfus as "the enemy Jew".

Zola, found guilty of defamation, fled to England, but his mobilisation of the left had been decisive. Dreyfus was eventually brought back home from Devil's Island, off French Guiana, and rehabilitated in 1906, four years after Zola's death.

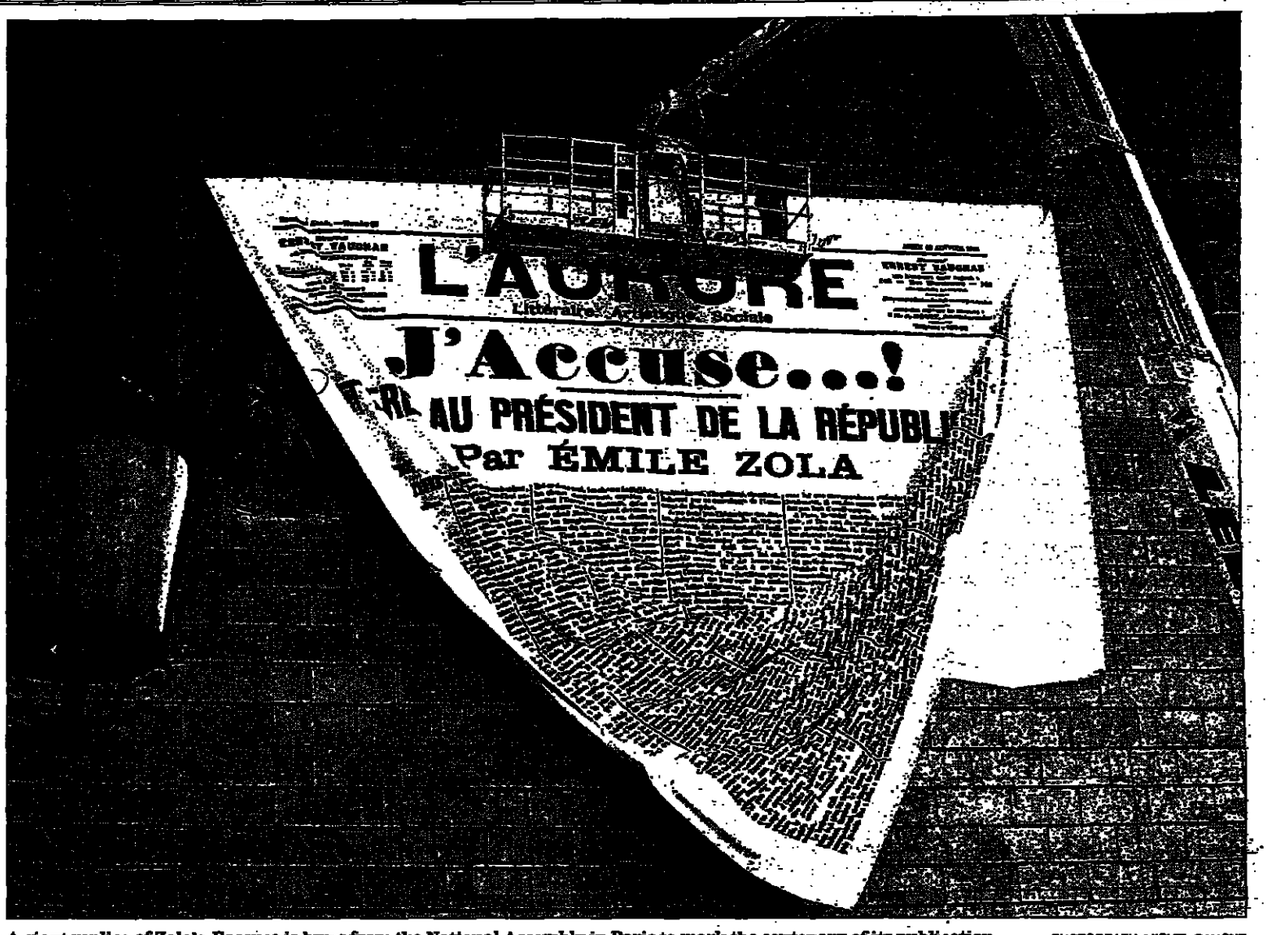
"The affair forced France to confront some of its most deep-rooted spectres," said the historian Pierre-Marco de Biasi. "Through the struggle for truth, tolerance and democratic principles, the country forged a new national identity."

Nationalism and xenophobia remain big issues in France. The National Front regularly wins 15 per cent of the vote.

"Today it's Arabs and negroes, then it was foreigners — and Jews as the ultimate foreigners," said Madeleine Rebérioux, honorary president of the League of Human Rights, which was founded in response to the Dreyfus affair.

And while today's state cannot be compared to the Third Republic, suspicions of cover-ups abound: last year the former defence minister François Leotard was accused of involvement in the assassination of Yann Piat, a French MP who said he had uncovered a plot to sell army land to the Mafia.

But perhaps the greatest lesson of the Dreyfus affair, said Ms Rebérioux, is the power of the intellectual in public affairs. "France has a mighty tradition, running from Rousseau and Voltaire to Sartre," she said. "It's key. But looking around us today, we have no one of the stature of a Zola."



A giant replica of Zola's J'accuse is hung from the National Assembly in Paris to mark the centenary of its publication PHOTOGRAPH: MICHEL GANGNE

France 'armed killers in Rwanda genocide'

Paul Webster in Paris

FRANCE continued to deliver huge consignments of weapons to the Hutu authorities in Rwanda after the massacre of the Tutsi minority began in April 1994, a French newspaper alleged yesterday in the first of four articles on Paris's complicity in the genocide in which 850,000 people died.

Le Figaro published a document showing an order for $8 million (£5 million) worth of heavy machine-gun and mortar ammunition from France and gave details of operations in which tons of weapons and equipment were flown to the former Belgian territory's capital, Kigali, or neighbouring Zaire, now the Congo. Some weapons were said to have arrived after the UN imposed an embargo.

The paper's Africa correspondent, Patrick de Saint-Exupéry, claimed that support for the Hutu-led regime was a high-handed act by the late President François Mitterrand, who was quoted as telling an aide that "genocide in those sort of countries isn't very important".

Other newspapers took up Le Figaro's allegations to support demands for an inquiry into French responsibility, which has never been admitted by either Socialist or Gaullist ministers. This is despite a parliamentary inquiry in Belgium which examined France's role in the central African state.

Hutu rebels kill nine nuns

HUTU rebels killed nine nuns at a convent in Rwanda's troubled north-western province, local officials said yesterday.

The nuns — three Rwandan Tutsis, three Rwandan Hutus and three from the Democratic Republic of the Congo — were killed last Thursday by attackers armed with guns, machetes and axes, the officials said.

The rebels encircled the convent at Rwerere on the border with Congo before breaking into the nuns' homes and killing them.

Catholic officials in Kigali could only confirm the deaths of five nuns, who had already been buried.

Hutu rebels stepped up their campaign last month, co-ordinating attacks and mounting cross-border raids. — *Reuters.*

Last October, the French minister for African co-operation, Charles Josselin, dismissed demands for a similar inquiry, saying that his country had "not wielded the machetes which killed hundreds of thousands of Tutsis".

Although Mitterrand ordered a reinforcement of links with the Hutu majority in Rwanda from 1990, it was Edouard Balladur's Gaullist-led government which was in power when the massacres started. The Rwanda murders are only the second recognised act of genocide, after the killing of Jews in the second world war, and are the subject of war crimes investigations.

But France's refusal to inquire publicly into the political background has shocked human rights organisations. Le Figaro said Mitterrand's initiative was incomprehensible because France was a "co-belligerent" in the civil war.

"The left had an absurd strategy based on the need for necessary democracy because the Hutus were in the right as they were 10 times more numerous than the Tutsis [Rwanda's hereditary ruling classes]," the paper said.

"The right was hardly less blind, refusing to admit that Africa was changing."

The key document in Le Figaro included an acknowledgment to the Rwandan embassy in Paris of an order to the French state-run armaments supplier Sofremas. The $8 million order included 12,000 shells and 20,000 mortar rounds. The last delivery was flown in on July 18 1994, the paper said, after France had despatched a UN-mandated peacekeeping force.

The French defence ministry denied yesterday that the arms had been delivered, but made no further comment. The revelations also embarrassed the foreign ministry, whose officials have never denied that Mitterrand was determined to curb of American interests in the region.

Traditionalists have words as battle of sexes gets linguistic

Jon Henley in Paris

IT WAS a small insurrection. But when the eight women in the French cabinet decided they would rather be *Madame la Ministre* than *Madame le Ministre*, they reckoned without the anti-revolutionary fervour of the Académie Française.

Forever *en garde* against unwanted intrusions, the defenders of the purity of the French language have protested to President Jacques Chirac at the dubious foreign notion that a masculine noun might occasionally deserve a feminine equivalent.

Ministre is always accompanied by *le*, regardless of his or her sex, the president was reminded in a letter from three of the académie's 40 members.

If this trend were allowed to continue, they said, France might succumb to the inventions permissible in French-speaking Canada and Belgium, where *une professeur* is encouraged for women teachers. Worse still, they added, France might fall under the influence of the United States or Britain, where mere fashion had dictated the introduction of such lamentable terms as chairperson.

The president has not yet said when he will rule on the matter, but the ministers have signalled that they will not give in lightly.

Being boring at US colleges

Martin Kettle in Washington

THIRTY years after their parents took to the campus barricades in record numbers, today's American college students are the most politically apathetic generation in recent history, a new survey has found.

But they are not only apathetic about politics. The students of 1998 are less interested in social issues than their 1968 predecessors — and much lazier too.

The annual survey by the University of California at Los Angeles asked the views of more than 250,000 American college students in their first year on campus. It found that just 27 per cent believe that keeping up with political affairs is an important goal, compared with more than 40 per cent a decade ago, and less than half the 58 per cent recorded in 1966 at the height of the Vietnam war.

Just 14 per cent said they frequently discussed politics, down from 30 per cent in 1968. Perhaps more surprisingly, there was a fall in the percentage who said it was important to be involved in cleaning up the environment, down from 34 per cent in 1992 to 19 per cent.

The survey of 252,082 new students at 464 universities in the US found that 55 per cent identified their politics as middle of the road — the highest figure in a decade.

But today's students have not foresaken public issues to concentrate on their careers and their studies. They are not only boring — but bored.

Researchers found what they called what they called "disengagement" from studies, with a record 36 per cent of freshmen saying they had been "frequently bored" during their final year in high school, up from 26 per cent a decade ago. Only 34 per cent of this year's new intake said that they studied for six or more hours each week, compared with 44 per cent in 1988.

Nevertheless, students still have academic ambitions. A record 40 per cent of freshmen intend to stay on and study for a higher degree, with 15 per cent of them aiming for doctorates.

The survey's founder, Professor Alexander Astin, said: "This academic disengagement and the continuing political disengagement is really troubling."

He said the trends were "part of a larger pattern of disengagement of the American people from political and civic life in general".

The survey also asked students about their personal habits. It found that more than 16 per cent smoke tobacco frequently, up from 9 per cent a decade ago.

There was one issue on which students seem to be edging towards agreement with their liberal predecessors of the 1960s. More than 35 per cent now believe marijuana should be legalised, a steep rise from 17 per cent a decade ago.

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الاصل

US officials in Indonesia to press for reforms

Muslims join fight to oust Suharto

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Jakarta

THE challenge to President Suharto's authority widened yesterday when Indonesia's two main Muslim leaders called on him to relinquish office and supported an announcement by Megawati Sukarnoputri that she was willing to succeed him.

"It is time Suharto stepped down as a prerequisite to overcome the multi-dimensional crisis," said Amien Rais, leader of the Muhammadiyah organisation, which has 20 million followers.

"He should have stepped down a long time ago, we need different people," said Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of the moderate Nahdlatul Ulama, which claims a grassroots membership of more than 30 million Muslims.

"Thirty years is too long for a country for any leader. Logically he should step down now or ... in March."

Their comments came as international calls for sweeping reform gathered momentum, after weeks of policy U-turns by President Suharto called into question his commitment to the terms of an IMF rescue and his ability to steer Indonesia out of its crippling debt crisis.

The United States defence secretary, William Cohen, is among an extraordinary assembly of top US officials, including a deputy treasury secretary and two assistant and one deputy assistant secretary of state, which is in Jakarta to reinforce the message sent in a telephone call from President Clinton to his Indonesian counterpart last week.

Yesterday Gen Suharto received calls from the German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the Japanese prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto. He was due to meet the US deputy treasury secretary, Lawrence Summers, and Mr Cohen. Today he will meet the Singaporean prime minister, Goh Chok Tong.

Mr Wahid argues that President Suharto must go because he is not prepared to push through reforms that would strike at the business interests of his six children.

Policy U-turns have called into question his ability to steer Indonesia out of debt crisis

Both Muslim leaders welcomed Megawati's announcement at the weekend that she was willing to stand for the presidency if no one else was nominated to replace him. In a fiery speech she attacked the "small dynasty of greedy rulers who alone will benefit from the great assets of our country".

Mr Wahid said: "30 million Indonesians support Megawati and don't want the president to stand again. That has to be taken into account."

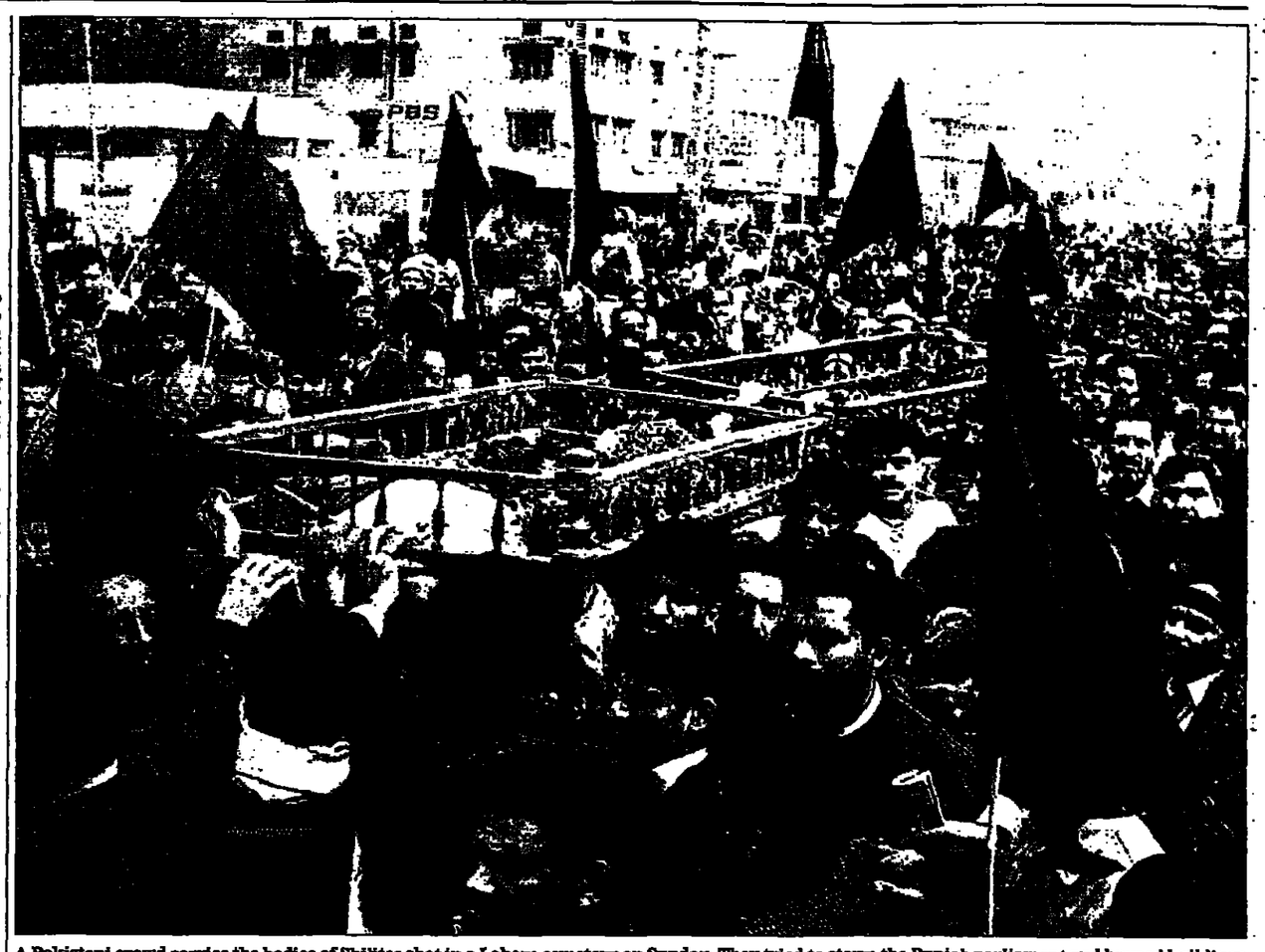
Megawati, aged 50, has no officially recognised party to back her candidacy — which must be proposed by groups in parliament — much less take on the apparatus of power through which President Suharto has held together the vast archipelago of 200 million people and more than 300 ethnic groups.

Mr Rais, himself nominated as a presidential candidate, said Megawati had "only a slight chance" of becoming president, an outcome which Mr Wahid also admitted was "almost impossible". He pointed out that millions of Indonesians still counted on the existing political system and parties to carry through reform rather than turning to outside opposition figures like Megawati.

Their view of her chances is widely shared. Megawaiti has no visible support from Indonesia's single most powerful institution, the army, whose leaders have so far remained loyal to the former general Suharto.

But as the economic crisis begins to hit ordinary Indonesians, forcing lay-offs and raising prices of staple foods, political observers believe Megawati's move may lead to agitation for political change.

In his six five-year terms as president, Gen Suharto has never been challenged by another candidate, but Megawati named seven prominent establishment figures, including serving and former vice-presidents and generals, who might stand for the presidency in the March election. Gen Suharto has resisted any notion of standing down.



A Pakistani crowd carries the bodies of Shi'ites shot in a Lahore cemetery on Sunday. They tried to storm the Punjab parliament and burned buildings

Mourning Shi'ites riot in revenge for Lahore massacre

Munir Ahmed in Lahore

THOUSANDS of Shi'ite Muslims smashed cars, set fire to buildings and tried to storm the Punjab provincial parliament in Lahore yesterday, in revenge for the slaughter of 28 Shi'ites at prayer.

Workers fled burning buildings as the rioters burned tyres and threw stones at police. Mourners wailed over the victims of Sunday's massacre of worshippers at a Lahore cemetery.

Warriors of Jhangvi, a secretive Sunni Muslim group called after a long-dead militant, claimed responsibility for the massacre and warned of further attacks on the minority Shi'ite community. "We will not spare Shi'ites in Pakistan," said the message delivered to news outlets.

Hundreds of police with armoured vehicles stopped the mob from reaching parliament. They set fire to the court house instead.

Dozens of young Shi'ites bared their chests and dared police to fire. "We're not afraid, kill us," they screamed. "From today we will fight. We will spare no one who kills our brothers." — *AP.*

The new South Africa

Fear enforces law of the jungle as the focus of Cape Town's badlands

Alex Duval Smith reports from the Cape Flats, where any order among the anarchy is imposed by the gangsters and their lackeys on residents in the area



Gang members outside Lapepa's 'community minded' bar. The owner is in jail for a carjacking PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

ERNIE LAPEPA is a "reformed" gangster who looks after his own. Long before any unfamiliar car turns into the dusty street leading to his breezeblock shebeen in the coloured township of Belhar, Lapepa's men have been forewarned. Neighbours know it is a good policy to be one of Lapepa's own.

Jeffrey, his soft-spoken sidekick, waits outside the windowless drinking den, distinguishable from Belhar's other shoebox-structures by its mural: the faces of three dead gangsters — Hammer, Milky and Benny — floating in heaven above the words: "Fallen not forgotten".

Above the doorway a slogan warns visitors: "Rumours are spread by jealous people".

There is a strong rumour that Lapepa, despite his self-proclaimed reformation, leads the Firm. This gang protects and seeks to expand the territory of the top drug baron of the Cape Flats, east of Cape Town airport, where 2 million coloured and black people live in townships and squatter camps.

Here, 26 people have died since January 1 in the worst-ever recorded series of gang-related killings. This week the army has been sent in.

Residents live in fear and confusion, deliberately spread by half a dozen gangs with an untold number of members, and their offshoots.

"It is impossible to say which gang controls your area because it changes all the time," said Ismail Faaltjie, a 42-year-old road maintenance worker who lives near Lapepa's shebeen.

"The guys are capable of anything. They stop the minibus taxis and just shoot the drivers and all the passengers. They execute shopkeepers if they want their premises. Sometimes they drive down the street, shooting randomly because they are high on drugs."

BUT at Lapepa's drinking den, Jeffrey was keen to expound on the community role of the only bar for miles.

"We had a Christmas party where the children were given biscuits and juice and the adults got free food and drink," he said, flicking a switch to turn on disco lights above a small dance floor. A strobe illuminated another slogan: "No excuses, no explanations, no apologies, not to anyone, not ever."

Jeffrey admitted that the shebeen's community activities, including singing competitions and financial help to pensioners and children, were running at low gear. He explained: "Lapepa is in jail for a carjacking, but you can call him there." He gave a payphone number.

During their periodic stints in prison, Lapepa and the leaders of the other gangs — whose names include The Americans, the Hard Livings and the Sexy Boys — run their activities from inside. There they have organised a substructure of prison gangs. Needless to say, it is impossible to get through on the payphone.

Depending on who you talk to, the authorities are either powerless or collaborating with the gangs. Some accuse the National Party, which controls the Western Cape, of turning a blind eye so as to show up the African National Congress government as being soft on crime.

Some officials are just plain terrified: last year Cape Town's unsuccessful 2004 Olympic bid committee went so far as to ask the gangsters for support. This resulted in a statement from the supposedly reformed gang leaders — who call themselves the Community Outreach Forum (Core) — that they would keep the peace during the games.

The police, despite some positive community initiatives, are largely powerless and discredited by their behaviour during the apartheid years, when they used gangs to mete out punishment beatings. Witnesses to gang crimes never come forward.

One man, who refused to be identified after witnessing two fatal shootings in one evening last week, said: "What I saw was nothing like what the police told the newspapers. But I am not going to the police. I do not know what side they are on. I have a family."

This atmosphere has left the way open to vigilante groups, such as the two-year-old People Against Gangsterism And Drugs (Pagad) which executes Core gangsters. But after being hailed initially as a positive grassroots initiative, Pagad lost credibility when its founder returned to drug dealing, the organisation's members began using "holy war" slogans and rumours spread of funding from foreign Islamists.

ALBERN Martins, who makes a living selling funeral insurance schemes to township residents, describes himself as a disciple of Dr Myles Munroe, an African-American evangelist based in The Bahamas.

Part of Mr Martins's role appears to be to provide a Christian counterpoint to Pagad's Islamic preaching, and he does so by holding prayer meetings in Belhar — under armed guard — for Core's gangsters.

A former papermill worker who "heard the word of God in 1980", Mr Martins admits he would like to act as an agent between the gangsters and the government. He also sees an opportunity to capitalise on the strong anti-black sentiment in the coloured majority of the Western Cape by becoming a "future political leader".

Faced with increasing calls for the restoration of the death penalty for gangsters, the justice minister and ANC leader in the Western Cape, Dullah Omar, feels he has considered most options.

"It is true that gangsterism is extremely serious at the moment, but we have to reform the institutions — the police, the courts — and give people faith in their communities before we can be rid of it.

"We have to build a human rights culture. The alternative is to go back to ruthlessness, and then South Africa will always be in a state of civil war."



A member of another of the Cape Flats gangs, the Americans, shows off his gun as he sits in the home of a drug dealer PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

People power halts work on disputed Indian dam

John Vidal Environment Editor

IT WAS a scene Mahatma Gandhi would have applauded. After months of secret preparations, the 10,000 villagers travelled in complete silence at the dead of night under a full moon.

Led by women and dodging police roadblocks by taking to little-known paths between villages and through the forests, they reached their destination at dawn. In the half light they streamed down the steep valley to the huge partly-built dam on the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh.

Within minutes they had suprised the few guards and cut radio communications between the construction camp and the outside world. By 6.30am one of the largest peaceful sit-ins in Indian history had begun.

Details of the capture of the Maheshwar dam by villagers who will lose their homes or land if the 100ft high barrier is completed are still sketchy, but reports from Delhi last night suggested that 25,000 protesters were at the remote site.

"Thousands of people from other areas are pouring in. At least 2,000 people are preparing to stay indefinitely," said a spokesman for the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save Narmada Movement), which has been mobilising people against the project.

The Maheshwar dam is part of the £3 billion Narmada Valley Development Project, which involves plans for 30 big dams, 135 medium-sized ones and 3,000 small ones in the valley.

The World Bank pulled out of the controversial project five years ago because of fierce local and international protests against proposals that would have displaced more than 100,000 people.

The 400MW Maheshwar dam, the first privatised hydroelectric power project in India, will submerge the homes of more than



2,200 families in 61 villages and destroy thousands of acres of cotton, chillies and wheat.

Opponents claim it will produce electricity for only a few hours a day, and that it has quadrupled in cost in 10 years. They say they have received no compensation and that the dam will destroy the economy of a large area.

The government of Madhya Pradesh says the project will bring electricity and economic development to areas hundreds of miles away.

Protests against the damming of the Narmada began more than 10 years ago and thousands of women have said they are prepared to drown rather than move. This is the first time that all work has been stopped on one of the dam sites.

"The people have taken over the blasting and construction works area. They are demanding complete stoppage of all work on the dam and a review with people's participation. The siege will continue until the demands are met," said a spokesman for the Delhi Forum yesterday.

Digvijay Singh, the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, tried to appease the villagers. Speaking yesterday in the state capital, Bhopal, he called a meeting for Thursday and officially halted construction until then.

This was rejected by the villagers: "We have stopped the work, not him," a villager replied. "We will not go until all work has been permanently stopped".

On October 3 villagers staged a rally of 10,000 people in the area, calling for work on the dam to be stopped and the project reviewed in consultation with the people. They received no response from the project or the government; in fact the work was speeded up.

"The people have now decided that they have given enough warning. They have now decided that they will themselves stop the work," a spokesman said.

News in brief

Police tie to massacre

Federal prosecutors have charged a police commander with bringing together the weapons for a massacre of 45 Indians in southern Mexico.

His claim that he was taking orders from superiors is the first link tying the state authorities to the December 22 massacre in the village of Acteal, Chiapas. — *AP.*

Koran for Chelsea

An Iranian religious centre has sent Chelsea Clinton an English translation of Islam's holy book, the Koran, the Tehran Times reported yesterday. President Clinton's daughter is a student. — *AP.*

Passion play

A Spanish couple were literally caught with their pants down at church on Sunday in the northern city of Valladolid. They were caught in the throes of passion. — *Reuters.*

Desert storm

A blizzard carrying snow and sleet swept across Jordan yesterday, cutting power lines and bringing life to a standstill in the desert kingdom. — *AP.*

China puts to death 16 after riots in separatist Xinjiang

Benjamin Kang Lim in Beijing

CHINA has executed 16 people for murder and robbery during a wave of anti-Chinese violence last year in its restive north-western Muslim region of Xinjiang, a court official said yesterday.

In Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, a spokesman for a Muslim exile movement said China had executed 13 Uighur separatists.

The Xinjiang Legal Daily, said that those executed included a gang of seven who killed 13 people and committed more than 10 robberies to "fan ethnic hatred and create an atmosphere of terror".

Pro-separatist Uighur militants rioted in Yining city in February last year, and this was followed by looting.

Militants planted bombs on buses in the regional capital, Urumqi, three weeks later, coinciding with funeral rites in Beijing for paramount leader Deng Xiaoping. The bombs killed nine people.

China executed 20 people between April and July last year for their roles in the Yining riots and the Urumqi bombings. Another 27 were jailed for seven years to life.

Uighur militants want an independent state, East Turkestan, in Xinjiang.

The court official said the latest 16 were put to death on December 29 after a court in the regional capital of Urumqi convicted them of murder, robbery and drug dealing in February. Fewer than half were Muslims from the Uighur and Hui ethnic minorities, said the official.

But a spokesman for the United National Revolutionary Front of East Turkestan in Alma-Ata said 13 of the 16 executed were Uighurs accused of shouting independence slogans.

The spokesman vowed that the Uighurs' struggle for independence would continue. "The Uighur people will not cease their struggle until the Chinese leave our country," he said.

The newspaper of the group, Voice of Eastern Turkestan, claimed the 13 had been denied lawyers during their trial and that their families had been refused entry to the courtroom. — *Reuters.*

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Breakthrough in the isles

At last Ireland has a road map to a settlement

IT CAME out in a rush and a leak and a messy scramble across trans-global telephone lines, but now we know what the parties to the Northern Ireland peace talks are talking about. Yesterday the governments of Britain and Ireland ended a hectic 48 hours by publishing the blueprint billed as their "best guess" at what a final peace settlement might look like. Today the men who sit around the Stormont table — and the woman who risked everything to make sure they stayed there — will gather to pore over the document and see if they can thrash out a deal based on its core ideas. Perhaps for the first time, the talks are about to move from procedure to substance — from process to peace.

It's a finely crafted balancing-act, the painstaking work of eight or more Dublin-Tokyo phone calls between Irish prime minister Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair — many of them running into the wee small hours of the Japanese morning. Those first conversations were probably tense, with the Irish government distressed to read details of the key discussion document — the so-called "heads of agreement" — not in their official in-tray but in the London newspapers. Still, those behind-the-scenes negotiations appear to have borne great fruit, even a replacement for the 1985 Anglo-Irish agreement. Yesterday Secretary of State Mo Mowlam was able to speak of a "breakthrough," while Ireland's foreign minister, David Andrews could hail "a very good day," one that had produced "a road map to a new agreement."

The strength of the document is its perch between the demands of the two sides. Unionists can celebrate the proposed creation of a Council of the Isles, an idea they conjured in the first place. Such a body would include a newly-created, devolved assembly for Northern Ireland *standing alongside* the equivalent bodies for Scotland and Wales as well as the Dublin and Westminster governments. Unionists like this because it knits them into a British structure, a kind of UK-plus. They can reassure their own hardliners that Belfast is to have a relationship with Dublin no stronger than with Edinburgh or Cardiff.

Meanwhile, nationalists can boast of the planned north-south ministerial council, which aims to bring together the executive functions of the new devolved body and the Irish government. Unionist leader David Trimble spoke twice on Sunday with Mr Blair — who must be struggling to do any Japan-related work while he's in Japan — insisting that the word "executive" not be *used to describe this cross-border* authority. Whatever the label, the new blueprint calls for a ministerial body for the island of Ireland — a real breakthrough, as the welcome from the nationalist leader John Hume testifies.

The trick will be to enable both sides to accept the gift to the other. Will Sinn Fein be able to live with a Council of the Isles, even one that does not speak of the *British* Isles? Will hardline unionists stomach a Dublin minister sitting on a committee with jurisdiction over Portadown and the Shankill Road? The hope is that each side decides to see the best in the plan, even to imagine it as a step on the way to their preferred destination. So nationalists might swallow the Council, presuming that the day-to-day Dublin-Belfast link will simply strengthen of its own accord. Similarly unionists might accept the cross-border connection, downplaying it as one among several links with its closest neighbours. Both sides might see their real future as smaller nations in Europe, with the old UK or new Council gradually fading in importance. Either way, both the angel and the devil are *now in the details. Let the serious* talking begin.



The middle-class means test

At least it's a chance to redistribute from rich to poor

LABOUR united both Left and Right yesterday. Both ends of the political spectrum came out against its new big idea in restructuring welfare: "affluence testing" under which the better-off would gradually lose various categories of benefits: maternity pay, child benefit, the state basic pension, and disability benefits. The Left condemned the idea on the grounds that this new middle class means test would suffer from all the inequalities and inefficiencies of income-related benefits applied to the poor. This is patently untrue. There would be no take up problem because the deductions would be made automatically and no stigma for, as the cartoonists have accurately captured, qualification would be a social cachet not a stigma. The Right rejected the idea on the grounds ministers were defaulting on an insurance principle. But national insurance lost its insurance principle years ago and has long been a tax with a different name.

There is one resounding reason why liberals who have been expressing their readiness to pay more tax should support this new proposal: the chance of redistributing resources from better-off people to the poor. A government which foolishly committed itself to holding income tax levels at their current rate for the next five years, will have to find resources from somewhere else if the obscene inequalities which brutally widened in the last 18 years are to be corrected. The challenge facing progressive policy-makers is finding alternative redistributive programmes to tax. That is why affluence testing has been pushed in these columns. It is not perfect. It has genuine faults but it works in Australia where the top 25 per cent of pensioners have their basic state pension gradually withdrawn. Do labour activists really want to reject a scheme under which people on £30,000 plus occupational schemes would see their £3,000 basic state pension transferred to the poor? Remember, a minimum guaranteed pension proposed by Labour's social justice commission would lift millions of poor pensioners off means tests and ensure an extra £700-a-year to 600,000 who refuse to claim. Why should the state reimburse employers for £1 million-a-year employees who can claim £20,000-a-week (repeat week) in maternity pay?

The devil will be in the detail. This is what is so unsatisfactory about the current debate. There is no policy paper, no properly costed alternatives, no analysis. What we have instead is a debate by media leak — including a breach of social security confidentiality in terms of Nicola Horlick's maternity payments — plus the occasional surreal ministerial interview. There are no principles or vision. The Prime Minister's distortions on welfare costs are shameful. Britain spends less on social protection than most continental countries. There is no crisis but, a vital longterm reform is being torpedoed by the Government's refusal to engage in a meaningful and honest dialogue.

A very Japanese apology

Reconciliation should not undercut just claims

HAVE THE Japanese really apologised? The answers come in Rashomon-like variety, according to the interests of those involved. Mr Blair has to balance domestic pressures against diplomatic aims. So the Japanese statement is called a "very significant step forward." It may only repeat the 1995 formula but this time it has the weight of the whole government behind it. British officials are also making the most of the three initiatives to "promote reconciliation" and a modest increase of funds. Whether the PoWs (and their grand-children) will leap at the chance to pay joint pilgrimages to old battlefields, and take up scholarships in Japan, is another matter.

Japan's interest in presenting its gesture in the best light, with a visit by the Emperor to Britain due in May, is equally clear. Tokyo has the same problem as Mr Blair in reverse. Its diplomatic aims would be better served by a more generous apology — and more generous funds. But domestic inhibitions, with a political culture which still fails to break free from the old postwar mould, are too strong.

The survivors of a prison regime in which one out of four died can hardly regard a form of words, lightly tweaked from 1995, with great enthusiasm. Nor will warmed-over "initiatives" be a substitute for proper compensation. Japan would improve its image much more by a simple cash offer to the survivors and their descendants. Otherwise the suspicion remains that Tokyo is merely waiting for them to die out.

Yet it is important to ensure that British criticism back home is not tinged with more primitive sentiments. Mr Blair runs the danger, through his over-enthusiastic response, of encouraging the other extreme. To press the interests of the real victims should not be at variance with reconciliation.

Letters to the Editor

It's all a matter of choice

DAVID Blunkett *is quite* right, in principle, to acquiesce *in the demand for* state funding of Muslim schools (Report, January 10). In reality, however, he may be unwittingly helping to create two classes of future British citizens: those with broadly-based secular, and those with strictly narrow Islamic, education.

If supporters of Muslim schools claim that they can get over the problem of integrating the Islamic ethos into the national curriculum, they cannot be serious. The national curriculum espouses multi-culturalism; the Islamic ethos is not averse to cultural and religious triumphalism. It is difficult to see how these mutually exclusive notions can be juxtaposed without confusing young minds.

Muslim schools can survive only if they follow a Muslim curriculum; otherwise, they have no rationale to exist. But experience from countries such as India and Pakistan shows that graduates of these schools face a high degree of discrimination in the job market. And therein lies the crux of the problem.
Randhir Singh Bains.
Shere Road,
Gants Hill, Essex IG2.

CLOSET agreements between the pharmaceutical industry and government to fix the price of branded medicines (Brand drug prices may be halved, January 9) do not serve the interests of the consumer, whatever David Sharpe, of the Community Pharmacy Action Group, might think.

The CPAG's own figures, from a 1996 report, show that the removal of resale price maintenance could save consumers £180 million a year. Moreover, cheaper and more *ready access to branded medi*cines is patently what consumers want. RPM is simply out-of-step with the times.

The argument that price fixing is essential to maintain small community pharmacies is also spurious. The Department of Health's essential small pharmacies scheme (ESPS) supports those pharmacies which would not otherwise be viable and so guarantees patient access. The real effect of RPM is to prop up inefficient operators and to deny consumers the benefits of choice.
Steven Round.
Marketing Director,
Superdrug Stores plc.
Croydon, Surrey CR0 4TB.

BEFORE I shed a tear for a British music industry under apparent threat (Piracy *steals notes from sound tal*ent, January 10), I want to know why the major party being "fleeced" is the British CD-buying public.

You analyse the costs behind a "legitimate £13.99 CD". Yet in the United States, where wages are, as a rule, higher that here, that same CD would be on sale for something like $13.99 (currently about £8.50). Cheaper CDs over here would surely remove the lure of the pirates.
Peter Marcus.
40 Queen's Avenue,
London N10 3NR.

YOUR review of a performance of Schubert's Winterreise (G2, January 8) described, at some length, one listener's impression of the strengths and weaknesses of the singer's interpretation of this great work. It appears, however, that this was the first known unaccompanied performance, as no mention was made of the pianist. I was under the impression that (at last) their contribution was valued as a partnership of equals.
John Blakely.
Keyboard Faculty,
Royal College of Music,
London SW7 2BS.

Memories may be made of this

FOR psychiatrists to claim that there are no such things as "buried memories" and therefore no such thing as "recovered memory" (Row over psychiatrists who destroy lives, January 12) is as reactionary as saying that all people who are depressed have buried memories of abuse.

That false memory syndrome exists is a notion that most psychiatrists, psychotherapists and counsellors accept. However, we also realise that, for many people whom we see, there is a possibility of "recalled memories" existing. In this case, although the actual event did not occur, the feeling of an abusive relationship was real for the person — that is, a phantasy (unconscious), rather than a fantasy (conscious) experience.

The effect of such a categorical denial of these issues by professionals can only lead to those who have experienced abuse feeling the futility in attempting to convince us of their plight when (true) recovered memories do occur.
Paul K Carney.
2 Gaveston Close,
Warwick CV34 5HR.

PROFESSOR Sydney Brandon is mistaken in his assertion that there is "no empirical evidence to support either repression or dissociation" of memories of childhood sexual abuse. The Journal of Psychiatry & Law, having reviewed 25 studies on amnesia two years ago, concluded that "studies addressing the accuracy of recovered memories show that recovered memories are no more or no less accurate than continuous memories for abuse." There are a growing number of documented instances, proven in court or by confession, of forgotten abuse.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists' deeply flawed draft report goes against current understanding not only about the effects of sexual abuse, but other traumas, such as war, rape and torture. It perpetuates the myths of a profession traditionally hostile to the notion that life can drive some people mad, preferring to see organic dysfunctions as the sole cause of mental disturbance.
Marjorie Orr.
Dir, Accuracy About Abuse.
PO Box 3125,
London NW3 5QB.

WHATEVER the rights or wrongs of the debate among psychiatrists, it is vital that children should not face even more disbelief. ChildLine hears every year from thousands of children who describe being sexually abused. Last year, 8,259 called us.

It is very rare for any of these children to have received therapy; they have usually not confided in anyone, except perhaps another child, what is happening to them. Some have only recently been abused; some have been abused for as long as they can remember.

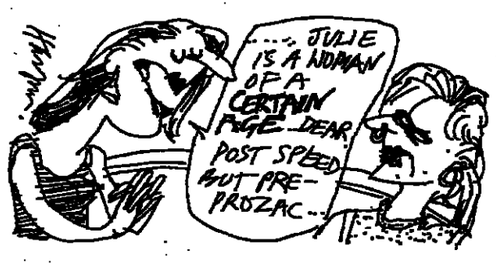
It can take years to reach the stage where they are ready to tell anyone but ChildLine what is happening to them. If and when they do, they may well find that they are not believed, for it is deeply painful for adults to confront the truth of sexual abuse of vulnerable children. It would be sad indeed if the work that has been done to break down society's reluctance to acknowledge that this does happen were to be undone.
Valerie Howarth.
Chief Executive,
ChildLine,
Studd Street, London N1 0QW.

THOSE who insist that allegations of abuse are false are inconsistent in their use of the words "belief" and "memory". Theraputic techniques cannot plant memories — they can plant beliefs, but not memories.

Those accused of abuse and their families and supporters are a very powerful lobby. I understand false allegations of abuse must be devastating but accuracy is essential so that justice is served all round. The accused have set the agenda and imposed inaccurate language on the debate.

There cannot be a memory of an event which has never happened; there can only be a belief that it happened. Individuals may believe they have a memory and, in good faith, say "I remember", but those who are accused cannot talk of memories in these circumstances, only beliefs or false accusations.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists should distinguish between the planting of beliefs in people's minds, which is possible, and the planting of memories, which is not.
Kate Prendergast.
School of Social Studies.
University of Leeds.



Oh, Julie

LIKE Julie Burchill (Flower of a demon seed, Weekend, January 10), the NME was my lifeline during the punk era. But while the Clash et al bowed out, and other chroniclers confined themselves to documenting the movement and their role in it, Ms Burchill inexplicably decided that in her adolescent angst there lay a message for all humanity, and has continued to assail us with increasingly irrelevant ranting.

Encouragingly, there do appear to be signs that the psychosis is turning to melancholy. Maybe she has finally accepted that her 15 minutes ended long ago, and for that we can all be grateful.
T Nabili.
12 Ellerdale Road,
London NW3.

JULIE Burchill says that Toby Young's mother and father must have been so "dreadfully, grievously disappointed in their son." Absurdly untrue. My dead wife, Sasha, and I were (and I am) very proud of him. He is kind and considerate as well as clever. Julie is up her private creek about him, as about so many other people.
Michael Young.
18 Victoria Park Square,
London E2 9PF.

I DON'T know which is worse. The outrageous vanity of a thirtysomething who considers that her shallow little life might be of any interest to the rest of us, or a newspaper which publishes this self-indulgent tripe on the premise that it ought to be.
Mike Pokorny.
1 Nunnery Stables,
St Albans, Herts AL1 2AS.

That town and country club

PROFESSOR David Hall (Letters, January 9) is wrong to suggest that the Government's household projections have not been challenged and that there is not much scope for providing new homes in urban areas. Prof Glen Bramley has highlighted serious flaws in the methodology and shown that the projections risk becoming self-fulfilling prophecies; building houses in rural areas can increase demand by attracting more people to the countryside.

An alliance of 15 wildlife and countryside groups highlighted the need to downgrade the influence of the household projections last July. In a recent Commons debate, the majority of MPs were also critical. The overwhelming message from this debate was that the future need not be like the past.

John Prescott should retain his optimism about the potential for urban renewal which household growth can bring. Thousands of people are moving into our towns and cities every week for the benefits they offer. We should be using new housing to improve the places where most people live, not damage the countryside that most people love.
Tony Burton.
Council for the Protection of Rural England.
London SW1W 0PP.

THE debate about building is hampered by the use of such terms as "urban village", which carry with them a nostalgic image of dwellings surrounded by an idyllic countryside. The challenge for architects and planners is to provide town-houses compatible with the needs and aspirations of people today; this is not the same as creating a village in the middle of a city.
Virén Sahai.
Cambridge Urban Forum.
Cambridge CB2 1BJ.

PERHAPS we may be told where these 5.5 million people are to be accommodated and hear from those adversely affected by these new towns.
A Wilks.
26 King Edward Street,
Whitstable, Kent CT5 1JU.

Jimmy's word

YOUR article on Professor George Salmond's unhelpful remarks about people on the street, in his Who's Who entry (Report, January 10), was right to describe the homeless problem in Cambridge as "phenomenal". For instance, in the last two years, Jimmy's Night Shelter has serviced 20,000 beds.

But the extent of the homelessness problem cannot be simplistically laid at the door of "professional" fraudsters. *What Prof Salmond fails to see* is that there is a significant group of disadvantaged people circulating from night-shelter to night-shelter across the UK. Insofar as we are not helping this group back into permanent, appropriate and affordable accommodation, nor helping them to find ways of supporting themselves effectively, we are keeping them on the streets.

Cambridge needs properly-supported housing for the homeless — to offer vital experience to those who find it difficult to cope with managing their own lives. Simply giving a homeless person a key is not the end of their problems.
Richard Howlett.
Jimmy's Night Shelter.
1 East Road,
Cambridge CB1 1BD.

Rebel songs

I HAVE been expelled three times in two days (Report, January 9) — from the European Parliamentary Labour Party, the Socialist Group in the European Parliament and the Labour Party — each time without the benefit of even one hearing. I have been told (by fax) that this punishment was necessary because of my "application to join the Green Party Group", which "has been accepted." But there was never any such application, *and there has been no such* acceptance.

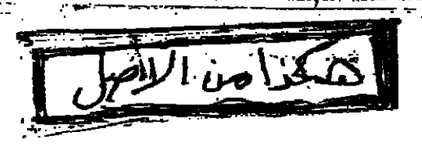
Friends are asking whether I shall appeal. To whom is it recommended that such an appeal be addressed? Party "modernisation" has carried off due process.

In the meantime, I have sent out a questionnaire to every Labour Party member in my constituency: up to now, 90 per cent of the responses are broadly sympathetic.
Ken Coates MEP.
12 Church Street,
Matlock, Derby DE4 3BZ.

I WILL not be joining the Green Party, as you report. Like Ken Coates, I will sit as an Independent Labour MEP.
Hugh Kerr MEP.
14 Home Close,
Harlow, Essex CM20 3PD.

A Country Diary

SOMERSET: A weekend when power-lines were blown down, 40-foot waves hit West Country coasts, and, even in our sheltered corner, sycamores bent like bows, did not tempt people out of doors. But those who went were sometimes rewarded. At Muchelney, which lies at sea level, I walked a narrow causeway that showed precariously just above stretches of shallow, but ruffled, floodwater with reeds and willows straining against the gusts. This was *not dangerous flooding*, though groups of people nearby were wading ankle-deep with a wary and experienced eye on the River Parrett, where it swelled almost to the top of an embankment. They live against the inconstant rhythm of waters that encroach and recede rapidly in ways that are not predictable or wholly manageable. The land rises steeply up 70 metres to a ridge at Burton Pynsent, and a monument put up by the elder Pitt to commemorate the Pynsent, who bequeathed the estate to him in gratitude for opposition to a tax on cider. From these heights, there was a view across low moorland, cleared of cattle each winter before the waters come, a precious haven for waterfowl. The heronry looked desolate, but in February will be busy with nesting. Nearer home, in Wincanton, families with the spirit to battle through the squalls had a rich reward in the memorial hall. Fifty children, some no more than two years old, gathered on the floor and sat enchanted for an hour by the quietest live drama this Christmas. It visits village schools and halls, and its technology amounts to puppets, a tiny ring of bells, a tin whistle and a drum. The children were wide-eyed and open-mouthed at the story of the tin soldier with only one leg. They swayed in gleeful recognition each time the refrain came round: "He kept his chin up and looked straight forward because he was a brave tin soldier". Their journey was worthwhile too.
JOHN VALLINS



هكذا من الأصل

Diary

Matthew Norman

CONCERN mounts that *the simmering hatred* between Gordon Brown and my old friend Mandy Mandelson is coming to the boil. The latest strike in this ceaseless war was detonated in the Independent on Sunday column of my so-called rival Paul Routledge, whose new biography of Gordon was written with its subject's most fulsome cooperation. Paul reports that on his recent jaunt to meet Donald Duck, Mandy described the Guardian as "the anarchist's paper", adding, "Do you know, they let them write what they like?" This accusation of journalistic independence is grave indeed, but Paul is unimpressed. Mandy's "bleating would be more credible," he seethes, "if he did not exploit his pseudo-revolutionary friends at the Guardian to peddle his spin-doctored stories". Gosh. We are tempted to call Charlie Whelan in the hope that he might shed some light, but are loath to trouble him so soon after a little chat on Thursday — one which Charlie, having denied copy approval on the book, closed with the words: "Of course, I'll have to call Paul and tell him about this." What can it all mean?

MEANWHILE, a shock rapprochement with Oofy Wegg-Prosser rears its head. Mandy's best little helper broke off all communication, you will recall, after the soup fiasco, when, in defiance of his instructions, we quoted his reply of "No thanks" to the offer of a bowl of nourishing broth. Nine months later, *the olive branch is proffered*. I am considering whether to accept. My heart says yes; my head, however, says any contact would risk letting daylight in on magic.

THE enchanted kingdom of my friend Monty Montgomery is beset by rumours yet again, with Independent editor Andrew Marr expected to be replaced within a fortnight by Rizla Rosie Boycott, campaigning editor of the IoS. As the Media section reported yesterday, Monty — by way of a dramatic foray into new territory — is demanding further cuts to an already lacerated budget, and these Andy is thought unlikely to tolerate. The editor himself is still full of *fight*. "*There's no reason to* expect any more cuts to be forced through," says the gifted and highly sensitive Andy. "I am not in resigning mode." We shall see.

FOLLOWING that John Humphrys interview with Harriet Harman, Alastair Campbell's feelings towards Today presenters have not been friendly. So they will be intrigued to learn how different things once were, in the days when Ali was delighting readers of Forum with his elegant prose. In the first of several articles about university sex, Ali considered his own varsity, Cambridge. Recalling how a shortage of women drove him to practise the arts of Venus as a *soloist, the Riviera Gigolo* made a confession. "Most of my midweek orgasms were manual, self-induced and inspired by a picture of Ursula Andress," wrote Mr Blair's press chief, "or Anna Ford." There is no word of Sue McGregor, Humphrys or indeed Jim Naughtie. Tomorrow, Alastair reveals how he finally found succour with a dark-haired Colombian from Gonville and Caius.

AN American smoker *has narrowly failed to* pull off the perfect crime, reports Cigar World magazine. After paying $5,000 for a box of rare vintage cigars, the man from Charlotte in North Carolina insured them against fire, and several months later put in his claim: he had lost the cigars, he wrote, "in a series of small fires". When the insurance firm refused to cough up, he sued and won on the grounds that the company had failed to define "an unacceptable fire". If *only the story had ended* there. Alas, the moment the cheque for $5,000 had cleared, the insurance firm had him arrested and charged with 25 separate counts of arson. Convicted on his own testimony from the previous trial, the poor fellow is now embarking on 25 terms of one year in prison, served consecutively.



THE COOK AFFAIR: Sex and politics

For democracy's sake call off the bullies

Commentary

Hugo Young

THE real attitude of the British people to public figures, whether Princess Diana or Robin Cook, is mysterious. Nothing last year occupied more miles of glib commentary than the great national gushing at the death of the Princess, yet, in retrospect, the response looks incomprehensible. It connects with nothing, has no consequential meaning. Undeniably it happened. But what transformation it may be said to have worked on the British character is a question to which the answers instantly offered now look preposterous. The monarchy is back to its pre-Diana torpor. The supposed *mood-change of the* people returns to the museum of invented trends, from which it was drawn by columnists under pressure to say something a little better than goodbye.

What the public really thinks about the private morality of politicians is just as prone to manipulation. Does the Cook affair really matter? Will infidelity, and an imminent divorce, make him a worse Foreign Secretary? Does the fact that many newspapers, by the space they give and the sniggering they indulge in, suggest the answer *to both questions is Yes*, reflect an authentic public attitude — or merely affect to speak for one which they are *striving to invent*?

Certainly Mr Cook is embarrassed. Like any politician — any human being — he would prefer to have his better side on show. He may never have claimed to be a back-to-basics paragon, but that's the working assumption people are invited to make about most of their elected officials. When the private life is exposed in a contrary light, the official takes a hit. But is this really incapacitating? Or have the people, on whose stoked-up outrage the entire edifice of the anti-Cook case depends, moved beyond the facile insinuations of the papers they read?

The case for them doing so *is strong, and the case for* believing they may have done so is plausible. As a matter of principle, it's important that public figures should not be ousted from public life through the mere exposure of their sexual peccadillos. I argued this in a defence of David Mellor which was then undermined by the aggravation of Mr Mellor's holiday arrangements with a supposed sympathiser with Palestinian terrorism! But if private sexual conduct, over which the press appoints itself simultaneously moralist, detective, prosecutor, judge, and instant executioner, becomes a hanging offence, our public life will not be cleansed but diminished. Democracy itself will have *been shouldered aside by* bullies.

The exposed politician can't expect impunity. He has to live with his embarrassment until he has lived it down. He needs to show he can still cut it in public life, a performance he cannot entirely control. Much depends on the disposition of power at the time. A strong government brushes peccadillos aside. Years ago, Nigel Lawson and Douglas Hurd, to name but two, experienced complications similar to Mr Cook's, but in the heyday of the Thatcher Government nobody took any notice.

The trouble for the Tories, Cecil Parkinson aside, began only when the feeble Major *government was on the ropes*, and the voters did not want it to survive. Every minor default of conduct by any pipsqueak Tory, in whatever zone of infamy, became part of a pattern that reinforced itself. The media are trying to stitch together similar catalogues of Blair's guilty names — Robinson, Jowell, Straw, now Cook — but the indictment will not work, because the public that delivered a big majority is not interested in seeing the Government torn apart.

This solid magnanimity ought to be especially operative in the case of Robin Cook. He's as good at his job as any minister in the Government. He may be a difficult colleague. Something in his intellectual superiority makes it as hard for him as it was for Denis Healey to give much time to the accumulation of close associates, still less a personal faction. He has more rivals than friends, in a party where personal bitchery is one characteristic seamlessly linking the New with the Old, the Blair with the Wilson years.

But Mr Cook impresses many people in his post. After watching him at close quarters for six months, a senior FO man, who could remember *as far back as the Heath Government*, told me he had never known a foreign secretary who dealt better with foreigners than the present incumbent. This was a startling endorsement. It wasn't a case of *the old FO vice that Mrs* Thatcher most detested, putting diplomacy before the national interest, but of intelligence and empathy that has attracted a lot of admiration. Cook was, said my informant, just sharper and more rounded in personal dealings with his opposite numbers than anyone at the FO was used to, or had any reason to expect.

> The exposed politician can't expect impunity. He has to live with his embarrassment until he has lived it down

The idea that personal embarrassment could affect public life is absurd, above all, in the man with this particular job. As Foreign Secretary, he deals with the leaders of countries among which, it's safe to say, there's not single one where callow judgmentalism operates with such ferocity as it does here. The notion that a man should be run out of public life because his marriage has failed would be as laughable in France, where the last President kept two households, as in Germany, where the putative next Chancellor has just married his third wife. As for the Third World, the British Foreign Secretary's private life can reliably be called a closed, irrelevant book wherever he appears.

So it's a domestic problem *in every sense. Its intensity* derives entirely from a supposition about the domestic electorate. The voters, allegedly, are about to make Mr Cook's continuance in office impossible. This was supposed to happen to President Clinton, and I have to concede that public scrutiny of the President's private parts has done irreparable damage to his credibility, which is a tragedy for world *politics, engineered by the sin*ister virulence of the American Right. But Clinton was elected and re-elected, by the most morally driven country in the West.

One would expect no less in Britain, if only the people could speak for themselves. They have *their feelings* manipulated, and then grandiosely depicted, by newspapers and Tory politicians who have their own agenda. When it comes to the power of public opinion, the onus of proof lies with those who call it in aid. It will be as bad a day for democracy as for government if Mr Cook is hounded out of office.

Lies, fortunes and big girls' blouses



Mark Steel

THERE'S a period in most people's childhood when you *want to get your* own way, but have yet to learn the art of lying. So you launch into a protest with nothing worked out. "Mum, I can't go to school today because - because it's too far."

"Don't be silly dear."

"The headmaster said we *can have today off*."

"Put your coat on."

"Ow. I can't go now, I've broken me arm."

Evidently Kenny Dalglish never got past this stage. Trying at the weekend to get Newcastle's cup match played at home rather than in Stevenage he grumbled: "It's not safe."

"Don't be silly Kenny", he was told.

"All right then, it's not big enough."

When that didn't work you wondered whether he'd say: "Oh yeah, I've just remembered. Our goalkeeper's allergic to Hertfordshire. It brings him out in a rash."

Asked to explain himself on Newsnight, he never recovered from Jeremy Paxman's opening question: "Is Kenny Dalglish a big girl's blouse?" *This isn't one of the half dozen* questions that are usually thrown at football managers, so none of the normal answers was going to work.

For a moment it seemed that he might try, and say: "Before the girl's blouse we've got a couple of important matches in the league, so we'll be taking it one garment at a time."

Instead he declared that he couldn't stop Newcastle fans travelling to the game without a ticket, and that this could be dangerous in a small town.

Which sounded rather like a gangster's threat. "Hello Stevenage. Nice market square you've got there. Be a terrible shame if a Geordie was accidentally sick in the fountain and naked in a shopping trolley though. Wouldn't it? Tut tut tut."

Newcastle fans don't seem to share this attitude. According to a poll, 70 per cent of them disapproved of the attempt to switch the venue. After all, whatever they may shout, most football supporters don't believe that if your team is higher than someone else's this automatically makes you part of a superior species.

Deep down most fans know that passionately supporting a team is daft. So they may shout: "You're shit and you *know you are*" at a crowd of opposing fans who include their closest friends. Or sing: "We're by far the greatest team the world has ever seen" when few of them would seriously argue that the current squad is, in all honesty, not just marginally better but far better than Pele's Brazil, despite currently being 15th in the second division.

So most fans accept that big clubs have no right to bully small clubs into changing the rules, but the manager sees things differently.

It's been suggested that *Dalglish is showing particular* concern for safety as a result of being at Hillsborough on the day of the tragedy. Hillsborough certainly has affected the situation, in that the Taylor report which was produced afterwards instructed clubs to build all-seater stadiums *in order to avoid such* a disaster being repeated.

This has been a tremendous success, according to Newcastle United plc's prospectus at the time of their flotation, which said: "The Taylor report . . . has created new opportunities in catering and the provision of executive facilities." This, it boasts, has led to "significantly risen gate prices", "higher revenues per seat", and "2,336 executive scheme places". No mention of safety, but does this all mean that Newcastle chairman Sir John Hall's initial investment of £5 million is now worth an estimated £103 million? To the businessmen involved, football is a commodity, and *the game itself* an afterthought. To the holding company of which Newcastle plc is now a part, the FA *forcing profits to be put at risk* upon the outcome of a football match must seem ridiculous.

WHEN the FA cup draw was made they probably thought: "Ah Stevenage. Small concern, we'll organise a hostile takeover bid and buy the buggers out."

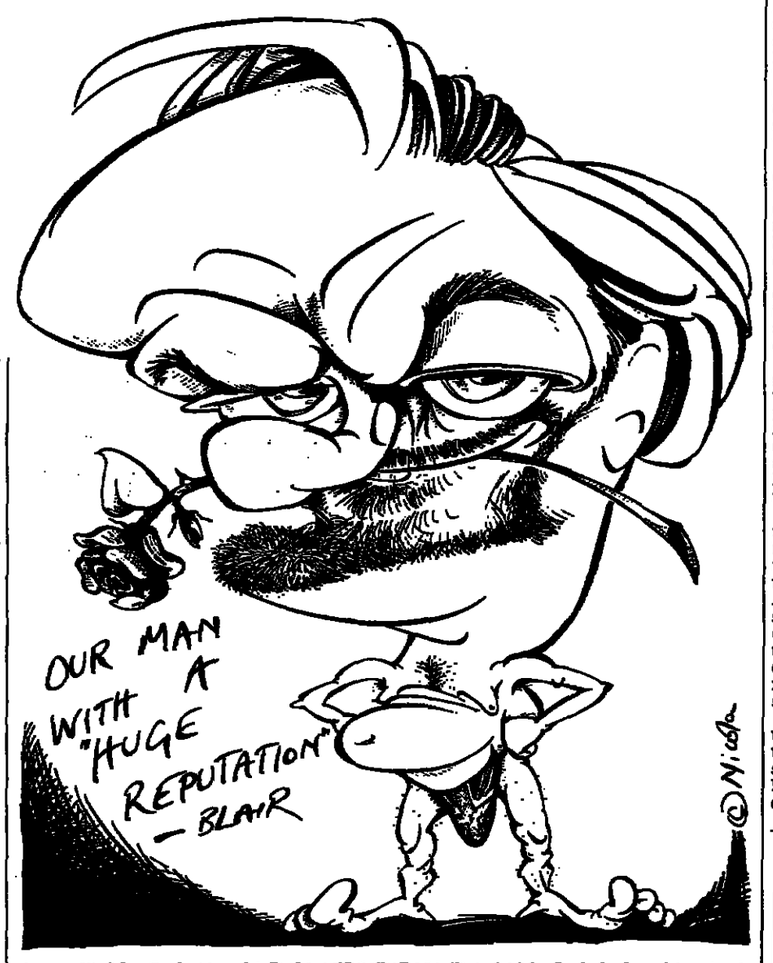
Maybe their initial approach to the Football Association was to say that in return for relocating their company into the Stevenage area for a 90-minute period, creating wealth and prosperity in the region they should be offered a two goal sweetener with an option to select the Stevenage players themselves.

If Stevenage get a penalty maybe a Newcastle plc director will get one of his old mates from Cambridge who's now at the Department of Trade and Industry to use his influence and get it annulled. And if they still lose they'll ask their accountant to carry Stevenage's goals forward to the following season.

These are the people whom Dalglish is answerable to, so he was probably carrying out orders in asking for the rules to be bent in Newcastle's *favour. Opposing fans* may be capable of a friendly drink together, but when businessmen chant "You're getting asset stripped, and you know you are", they mean it.

THE COOK AFFAIR:
Roy Greenslade on the press

Ratting on their promises



WAS the press's post-Diana shame a sham after all? Were all those *promises about recognising* people's needs for privacy just a public relations exercise? Is the editors' new code of practice, so widely trumpeted as heralding a genuine change of heart, nothing more than a cynics' charter?

Within weeks of agreeing a supposed tightening up of their self-regulatory guidelines, editors have fallen over themselves to intrude on the privacy of Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, his estranged wife, his current lover and several former friends.

In case it has slipped editors' minds, may I quote from the code they ratified at the end of November and agreed *to abide by from January 1*. Clause 3 (i) states: "Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence. A publication will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent."

Such intrusions can be justified by demonstrating that the resulting stories have been published in the public interest. The code offers three definitions of the public interest: exposing crime, protecting public safety and "preventing *the public from being* misled by some statement or action of an individual or an organisation".

None of these is remotely relevant to what has been published about Robin Cook in the past four days. But Lord Wakeham, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission which polices the editors' code, is well aware of the *giant loophole* exploited by newspapers which offer a public interest defence.

That's why there were no *changes to that key clause* in the amended code. As Wakeham candidly observed: "I have been in this business for far too long to know there is no point in trying to redefine the public interest."

In other words, in spite of that weakness having led to all manner of problems in the past, editors wouldn't wear a more specific definition. It suits them to conflate "the public interest" and "what interests the public" so that people can be ridiculed at will.

This saga began ignominiously last August when the News of the World exposed Mr Cook's relationship with his secretary, Gaynor Regan. I *was mystified then by the* justification for publicising this entirely private matter which had not the least bearing on Mr Cook's ability to do his job.

PAPERS were thwarted in their attempts to make as much of this as they desired by the discreet and dignified way in which Mr Cook, his wife Margaret, and Mrs Regan reacted. None of them was lured into making public statements, nor *did they trade in those off-the*-record, unattributable briefings which allow journalists to make so much mischief. Tony Blair also refused to offer any hostages to fortune, so the matter appeared closed.

Enter TV researcher and author Linda McDougall. She claimed that during an interview with her just a few weeks after the Cooks' marriage split, Mrs Cook poured out her heart. According to *Ms McDougall in the Times* she accused her husband of having "several affairs". Mrs Cook has since disputed the interview's authenticity and Ms McDougall has stoutly defended it. Doubtless the truth will one day emerge, but the important factor is the opening it provided for the press, which had clearly been waiting for the opportunity to fall on Mr Cook.

The next day's papers were full of it: "Romeo Rascal Robin" (Express); "Revenge of Cook's wife" (Daily Mail) and "Mr Cookie's Nookie" (The Sun). *The Times, boosting its* own interview, headlined its splash: "Blair trip clouded by Cook's love life", a none-too-convincing claim.

The Sunday Telegraph went further still along the tabloid road in a front page story headlined "Foreign Office gives Cook's mistress rights of wife". She had been to his "grace-and-favour mansion" and "the couple have also appeared at official functions together".

This mudslinging attack on Mr Cook had nothing to do with his abilities as a politician. *Instead, it was an explicit* politically-motivated attempt to destabilise him. Doubtless Mr Cook will not complain about all this to the PCC, so nothing will be done. Lord Wakeham, if he says anything at all, will announce (as he did following the William Straw episode) that papers have acted responsibly. No wonder the people have lost faith in the press.

The author is a former editor of the Mirror

No Muslim school for me, thanks



Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

PRAISE for state funding for Muslim schools came from Roy *Hattersley* in yesterday's Guardian. I am a Muslim, but I would not send my children to one.

It is true that when the announcement came, there was dancing in the hearts of most British Muslims including *myself*. After decades of struggle the British state, by providing funding for two Muslim schools, accepted that Muslims should have the same rights as Jews and Christians. Morally and otherwise this was unavoidable, especially under the European Convention of Human Rights.

Our taxes have been paying for Jewish, Catholic *and C of E schools — many* of which refuse to take our children because their first criterion is that the parents *should be committed* to the school's specific denomination.

The funding will make an *enormous* difference not only by enabling poorer Muslim parents to gain access but by helping good schools to realise their potential. I have seen seriously under-resourced Muslim girls' schools which are nevertheless impressive places of learning with none of the coarseness of many inner city comprehensives. The teachers have huge expectations and parents trust them. One girl, an immigrant from the state sector, told me she moved because she hated being stereotyped by her white teachers who thought that encouraging Muslim girls would create problems in the family. *All* in all, Blunkett did the right thing.

So why did joy soon turn *into something* like foreboding? I phoned 20 close Muslim acquaintances to see what they felt. They were delighted parity had been achieved. But no, they wouldn't send their own children to a Muslim school. Nor would I. Not because I don't trust them to provide my daughter with an adequate education (though there are schools which do deliberately clip the aspirations of girls); not because the schools will produce recruits for a British intifada, or because I am ashamed of my religion. I am immensely proud to be a Muslim and love deeply my many Islamic cultural legacies. But separation is dangerous, as is the belief that victims automatically accrue virtue and perfection. We have to think not only self-critically but strategically if we want to move from the wilderness to the heart of Europe.

We are already demonised, and prejudice against us has become legitimised in ways that would be unthinkable for Jews and blacks. When even heavyweight writers like Connor Cruise O'Brien and Bernard Levin freely denigrate us, we should understand how vulnerable we are.

WITHDRAWING to some enclave is not a solution. Pride dictates that we should not bend before such prejudice and Bosnia provides a terrible metaphor for what might happen. Safe havens became easy meat for the enemies of Muslims. Our children will be seen even more as aliens within. The rest of society will never have to engage with our thoughts, ideas and lives. We too will lose out. In our *past encounters with other* civilisations — Indian, Persian and Greek — we distilled and absorbed what was worthy and were able, as the academic Zia Sardar says, "to derive benefits from these contacts and to prosper".

Separated out, our children *might acquire an over*developed sense of their own special status and a sense of grievance. Muslim newspaper editor Fuad Nahdi warned last year that because of Islamaphobia, "platoons of young angry Muslim men are mushrooming all over the country . . . they are bitter and resentful . . ."

The unanswerable question is whether they will get more or less militant surrounded only by other Muslims with no experience, until it is too late, of friendships and mutual respect between different faiths. Later, out in the real world, will they have the various and devious tools we have acquired through confronting hatred, misunderstanding and ignorance? How will they function without these?

Perhaps in concentrating *on what has been unjust*, we have lost sight of what might be unwise.

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Klaus Tennstedt

A German vision for London music



Larger than life . . . Unlike most conductors, Klaus Tennstedt was physically imposing and a formidable figure on the podium PHOTOGRAPH NEIL LIBBERT

IF THE international star conductor is generally a musician of driving ambition, Klaus Tennstedt, who has died aged 71, was one of the great exceptions. It was not until 1971, when he was already 45, that he was heard outside East Germany. Even after his emergence as an international figure in 1974, when he first conducted in America, the Germans persisted in regarding him as merely a *kapellmeister*. Yet here was a natural visionary, one who could combine expressive warmth and freedom with purposeful strength, above all in the central German repertory.

His career in Britain was built on his close relationship with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. His first appearances in Britain were with the London Symphony Orchestra and he had not conducted the LPO at all when, thanks to the sagacity of the agent and star-maker, Ronald Wilford, he signed a contract with EMI to record all nine of the Mahler symphonies with the LPO. In 1983, well before the project was completed — with the massive Eighth Symphony in 1986 — he was appointed that orchestra's principal conductor, and though after four seasons he was forced by illness to resign, those years marked a high point in the LPO's history.

After that, his periodic reunions always inspired performances of exceptional intensity and emotional depth. Physically, like Furtwängler and Klemperer — and unlike most leading conductors, who tend to be below average in height — Tennstedt was a giant of a figure. On the platform he tended to look formidable, even forbidding, but meeting him, you registered at once a bonhomie and warmth combined with a shyness unexpected in a conductor.

He was far from easy going, but many of his problems stemmed from an element within him of diffidence and self-questioning, and latterly from his ill-health. Even after he returned to conducting, after intensive treatment for throat cancer, he had to cancel a fair proportion of his scheduled concerts, even with his favourite LPO.

Tennstedt's career presents an interesting parallel with that of another conductor much-loved in London, Rudolf Kempe. Tennstedt, like Kempe, was an orchestral player who rather reluctantly ascended the conductor's podium, and whose subsequent rapid progress similarly came without his pushing. Tennstedt, in his last months as concert-master in East Germany, warmly remembered playing under Kempe. He could very well have remained a violinist all his career — just as Kempe might have remained an oboist — but for a nerve condition in his hand that made it hard for him to play.

A pianist as well, he had been concert-master in the opera house at his home town of Halle ("birthplace of the well-known English composer, Handel", as he wrily used to put it) but switched to become a repetiteur. That in turn led to his conducting a few operas, and from there he went as repetiteur/conductor first to Chemnitz (Karl Marx-stadt) and on to the Dresden Landestheater.

He won his first job as full music-director in Schwerin, and stayed nine years, largely ignored by the communist authorities. Unlike some of his East German conductor colleagues, Tennstedt was never a political operator. Yet he did progress as far as conducting for Felsenstein opera productions in Berlin and expected that to be his peak. But in 1971 he was asked to work in Stockholm for six months and was then given a post in Kiel, West Germany. He quickly decided to make his permanent home there, in a house on the edge of the Baltic.

It was Rolf Lieberman, producer and *intendant* in Hamburg, who persuaded the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's general manager to hear him, which led to an invitation to Toronto in 1974. His success was immediate and he was promptly invited to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra. That began a procession of successes, helped by the publicity machine, but justified by the inspired results wherever he appeared. Only when he returned to Germany was there a strange reluctance to regard Tennstedt as different from the man they had known as a kapellmeister.

His agent, Ronald Wilford, who had been a key figure in the careers of such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti and Andre Previn, played an important part. Tennstedt used to say that his relationship with Wilford was cemented when he challenged him to a game of poker, to which they were both devoted — Tennstedt's orchestral musician father got to know the composer Richard Strauss through a love of card-playing in the early years of the century. The composer was due to conduct one of the earliest performances of *Salome* in Breslau (now Wroclaw), and his first remark to the orchestra was to ask whether anyone played the card game Skat. Tennstedt senior shot up his hand, and they became firm friends.

The young Klaus never met Strauss, but he remembers the many details of interpretation that his father passed on to him about the composer's performances.

A high proportion of Tennstedt's many EMI recordings were made with the LPO. The Mahler cycle with which he began his recording career was later supplemented by a re-recording of *No 5*, made live at the Royal Festival Hall, which captures even more vividly than his studio one the intensity and imagination of his conducting. Similarly the video recording of his live performance of *No 8*, also at the Festival Hall, outshines even his prize-winning studio recording of that *Symphony of a Thousand*.

He also recorded with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. But Tennstedt was, above all, a German conductor far more fully appreciated in Britain and the United States than he was at home, one whose dedication and refusal to indulge in showmanship ensured that each concert he gave was a freshly moving experience. That he was dogged by illness — only seemed to intensify his vision and imagination. He is survived by his wife, Ingeborg.

Edward Greenfield

Klaus Tennstedt, conductor, *born June 26, 1926; died January 11, 1998*

David Wainwright

THE journalist and author David Wainwright, who has died aged 68 from lung cancer, was one of the most improbable diary editors of a popular newspaper in old Fleet Street. He was cultured, quiet, humorous, introspective and shy, yet he successfully held down a series of powerful jobs in the cut-throat days of the old London Evening News from 1952 until 1974. He even wrote a book about how to do it: *Journalism Made Simple* (1972), which remains one of the best guides to the practice of the newspaper trade.

Wainwright's career came about almost completely by accident. In 1947 his Liverpool College housemaster gave him a novel by John Connell as a farewell present. Later, when reading English at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, he heard a radio broadcast by Connell and wrote him a fan letter. Connell was then the Evening News's leader writer and thus — after a trial — was David hired as deputy leader writer of the paper.

Apart from a break, during which he wrote his old school's history, helped Kurt Hahn draft the Atlantic College's founding prospectus and travelled the world to write a book about Voluntary Service Overseas, he worked for the News until its closure. From 1974 to 1986 he was the Social Science Research Council's director of information, and was then publications consultant to the European Science Foundation until 1996.

He wrote a series of company histories, a history of the Royal College of Midwives and books about music — notably *The Piano Makers: A History of the British Piano Industry*; and *Broadwood by Appointment: The History of John Broadwood and Sons Ltd 1732-1982*. He owned the first still extant Broadwood which he bought at auction for a song. He spent one winter building his own harpsichord.

In 1957 he briefly resigned from the Evening News rather than write a condemnatory leader about the contents of the Wolfenden Report on homosexuality. A compromise was reached between Wainwright — who was always open about his own homosexuality — and his editor, whereby he wrote an editorial which did not specifically disapprove of the recommendation that homosexual acts between adult males in private should be legalised.

It remained a matter of some considerable professional pride to him that the rival Evening Standard leader pontificated that the report should "on no account ... ever be implemented".

Julia Langdon

David Wainwright, journalist; born February 21, 1929; died January 5, 1998

Martin Bayer

The ANC's Pimpernel

ATTEMPTS to render the lives of solicitors more exciting than they actually are should be viewed with scepticism. But for Martin Bayer, who has died of a heart attack at the age of 66, the term "supporter of revolutionaries" would not be out of place.

One of the few people who knew of his activities was John Collins, Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, and founder of the International Defence & Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF), which, for more than a quarter of a century, smuggled £100 million into South Africa, most of it to defend political activists in court. When the IDAF was banned by the Pretoria government in 1966, Bayer provided the clandestine channel through which the money arrived in the offices of sympathetic lawyers in South Africa. BOSS, the security service, never cottoned on.



Paymaster . . . Bayer's City life masked his secret activity

Bayer, born in Kimberley diamond country, where his father was a doctor, had law degrees from the University of Cape Town and Queens' College, Cambridge. He lectured in law for a few years in Johannesburg, before returning to England, where he joined the firm Birkbeck, Julius, Coburn & Broad, later to merge with another firm to become Birkbeck Montagu's. (Ironically, in view of what would happen, the "Julius" part of the firm was solicitor to Consolidated Goldfields and the firm's offices at 49 Moorgate was also the headquarters of the Southern African mining house.)

Until 1966, IDAF had openly financed the Treason and Rivonia trials, earning thanks from Nelson Mandela for saving him and his co-accused from the gallows. As a result of the ban, lawyers funded by the newly internationalised IDAF faced imprisonment and expulsion from their profession. It seemed, initially, that foreign aid for political trials would be blocked.

However, through Neville Rubin, a South African lawyer wanted at home for sabotage, Collins arrived at Birkbeck's. Rubin suggested the idea of a barriered system of transmitting money to South Africa. He then recommended the politically low-profile solicitor, Bayer, needed to carry the subterfuge through. Bayer met Collins at his home at Amen Court, with his articled clerk, William Frankel. Rubin, and IDAF head of trial aid, Phyllis Altman. Four South African Jews and the Canon of St Paul's would alone be privy to the workings of a scheme which funded thousands of trials.

The arrangement was elegantly simple. When Altman had a case that IDAF wanted to support, Bayer, code named "Mr X", passed it on to a friend at another firm. He scattered the scent more widely through lawyers in New York, France and Switzerland. All were sworn to secrecy about the Birkbeck connection and none knew that Collins was behind it. They would write to a designated attorney in Johannesburg or Cape Town offering the help of a well-known figure.

Bayer also set up a series of trust funds in the name of apparent benefactors, like the Labour peer Lord Mitchison, the author J B Priestley and the Booker sugar baron, Jock Campbell, all friends of Collins. It was another smokescreen. Very little money came out of their pockets. The real paymasters, Scandinavian governments and the United Nations, transferred funds into the bank accounts of these trusts in Zurich, whence Bayer moved it on via the second-line solicitors to South Africa.

In the hiatus between the ban and the take-off of the new secret system, Oliver Tambo, the ANC leader, told Collins its members were being jailed without legal defence. Bayer was dispatched to South Africa to reassure attorneys that money was still available. At the end of his stay, he found that his hotel room had been searched by the security police.

As well as his clandestine political activities, Bayer had a conventional life as a City solicitor, rejuvenating Birkbeck, bringing in other international business and opening branches in New York, France and Switzerland. His office and his home in Hampstead, traditional retreat of his well-heeled fellow countrymen, was a place of fine paintings, prints and porcelain. He was, for many years, a director of the Fine Arts Society.

His partners knew only in general terms of a scheme to aid those facing political trials in South Africa and accepted Bayer's assurance that he was not funding terrorism. South African clients sympathetic to the anti-apartheid struggle knew nothing of his secret activities — I wrote about South Africa for many years, and though he was my solicitor, he never let on. The Defence & Aid files were held in a safe to which only Bayer, Frankel and their secretaries had access. As a precaution they were listed as "St Paul's School".

Bayer left Birkbeck in 1985 and became senior partner at Bayer Rosin, which in turn was merged into Mishcon de Reya, for whom he became a consultant. Birkbeck Montagu's also became a morsel in the legal profession's ceaseless appetite for bigness. It is now part of Penningtons.

Bayer was recuperating from an earlier heart attack at his home in France when he died. The villagers of Montfort, Gers, gathered to mourn the death of the English aesthete. His humanist funeral in London demonstrated his range of friends and interests, with music from the Ink Spots' *Coffee and Tea* to the *Ode to Joy*.

He is survived by his brother, Spencer, a veterinary surgeon in Braintree.

Denis Herbstein

Martin Harold Bayer, human rights lawyer, born January 24, 1931; died December 27, 1997

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

THERE were several mistakes in a table we published in some editions on January 8 showing the Government's literacy targets for local education authorities in England. According to the Department for Education and Employment, the proportion of 11-year-olds reaching the expected standard by 2002 should be: Bedfordshire 85 per cent, Bournemouth 88 per cent, Greenwich 75 per cent, Islington 79 per cent, Lewisham 80 per cent, Oxfordshire 85 per cent, Surrey 90 per cent. Figures for the performance of authorities in 1996 should read: Brent 54 per cent, Darlington 59 per cent, Enfield 56 per cent, Leeds 57 per cent, Surrey 69 per cent.

IN GUARDIAN Sport, January 9, we confused readers by tipping Commanche Court to win the Ladbroke Hurdle at Leopardstown, on Page 15, while telling them on Page 12 of the same issue that the horse had been withdrawn, which was the case. The error was due to a lack of liaison.

IN THE caption to a photograph with a football report of Southampton's win over Chelsea, Page 22, December 30, we wrongly identified Carlton Palmer as Ken Monkou. Apologies to both of them.

WE MISSPELT the name of Louisa Young at the end of her letter to the editor, Page 20, January 10.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Death Notices

ALSTON. Daphne Christine, mother of Camilla, Max and Zoe Davies. Passed away on Wednesday 7th Jan aged 68. Cremation at 10.30 am Friday 16th Jan at Lewisham Crematorium, Verrant Lane, London SE6. Family flowers only. Donations to Alzheimers Society.

CHANDLER. Nezet, suddenly but peacefully at home on January 7th 1998, aged 67. Beloved wife of the late Frank Chandler and much loved step-mother and step-grandmother. Dear friend of many. Funeral at 2.30 pm Thursday 15th January at Altrincham Crematorium. Family flowers only, donations in lieu to SCOPE c/o Funeral directors, Arthur Gresty & Co, 308 Manchester Rd, Altrincham WA14 5PH.

GORDON, Iain, Putney Vale Chapel, 3.30 pm 14th January. Donations to Pro Dog or Chihuahua Rescue.

LLOYD, Highfield Rowlands Gill, Tyne & Wear Ezra Lloyd died on 2nd January at home aged 78 years. Service and cremation will take place at Mountsett Crematorium, Tipton on Wednesday 14th January at 3.30 pm. Would friends please meet at Crematorium.

LONGLEY. Pat, Emeritus Professor Patricia Longley (nee Condry), conference interpreter, teacher, linguist and author, died on 5 January in the Hospital of Ambilly, Haute Savoie, near Geneva, aged 83, as courageous in death as she was in life. The almost unbelievable extraordinary character leaves a great void in the lives of her son, David, her daughter-in-law, her nephew, her grandsons and her great-grandchildren, as well as her friends, colleagues and former students. A ceremony of farewell will be held at the Chapelle de Corbières, rue de l'avenir, Ambilly at 2.30pm. on Thursday 15 January.

WATERLOW, Remy. On Sunday, January 11th 1998 at St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, Australia. Much loved wife of Nick, mother of Anthony, Luke and Chloe. Died peacefully after a long and courageous fight against cancer. Her warmth, humanity, and generosity of spirit will be with us always. A Memorial Service will be held in London, date to be announced later.

WESTBURY. Richard Frederick, aged 45, passed away peacefully at The Rowans Hospice, Purbrook, Hants on January 8th, 1998. Funeral service at Portchester Crematorium on Monday, January 19th, at 1.30pm. Friends and colleagues welcome. Family flowers only, with donations if desired for "The Rowans Hospice c/o Barrells F.D. 'Lawnswood', 245 Fratton Road, Portsmouth PO1 5PA.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4129 between 9am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

Birthdays

Craigie Aitchison, painter, 72; Clive Betts, Labour MP, 48; Richard Blackford, composer, 44; Michael Bond, author, creator of children's character Paddington Bear, 72; Dr Sydney Brenner CH, FRS, molecular geneticist, biologist, 71; Sir John Caines, educationalist, 65; Carolyn Corben, fashion designer, 35; Edward Crew, chief constable, West Midlands, 52; Tim Flavin, actor, dancer and singer, 39; Stephen Hendry, snooker player, 29; Anna Home, head of children's programmes, BBC Television, 60; Ronan Rafferty, golfer, 34; Sean Rea, opera singer, 56; Harry Roche, former chairman and chief executive, Guardian Media Group, 64; Lorna Sage, lecturer and literary critic, 55; Bernard Shrimsley, journalist, 67; Robert Stack, actor, 79; Kenneth Turpin, former vice-chancellor, Oxford University, 83.

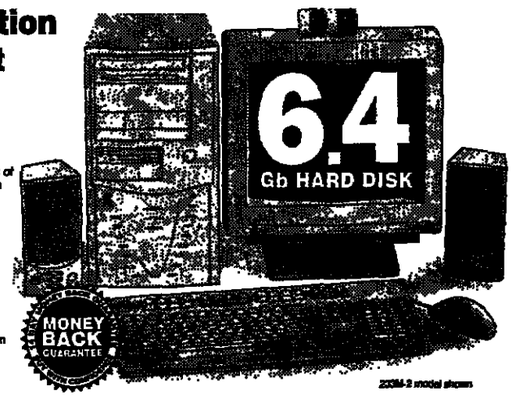
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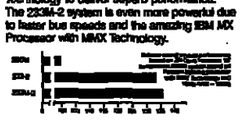


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Analysis

Means tests



The farce of public interest 9

Why this new-born baby is screaming

Its mother is caught by our unjust benefits rules: to them that have, it shall be given; to them that have not, it shall be taken away. Is the answer 'affluence testing'? **Sarah Boseley** and **David Brindle** report



IS NICOLA Horlick, a high-flier in the City on perhaps £1 million a year, or Deborah Banks, a low-paid part-time Tesco worker, more in need of financial help from the state when she has to take time off to have a baby? Harriet Harman, the Social Services Secretary, backs Mrs Banks. Yet the law at present plumps for Mrs Horlick.

That is why universal benefits such as statutory maternity pay — available to rich and poor alike — are high on the Government's agenda for reform. As Tony Blair prepares to begin a series of "welfare roadshows" this Thursday in Birmingham, the Government is floating the idea of subjecting the recipients of such benefits to an "affluence test". The test would be designed to screen out the better-off, and so make resources more available to those who need them. But it is already being seen by critics as an extension of means-testing by another name.

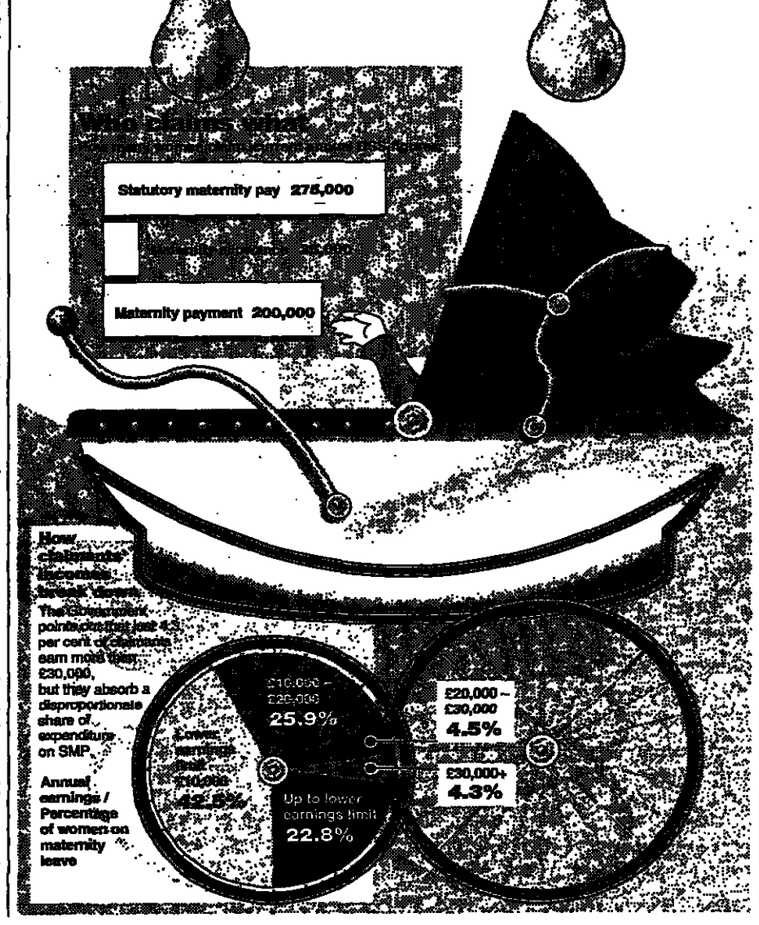
Certainly maternity pay, for one, is now covered by a jumble of laws and regulations that leave employers confused and low-paid women workers out of pocket. The Government recognises that the system can be unfair — even though there is little agreement on how it can best be reformed. But what the Government and campaigning organisations such as the Maternity Alliance do agree is that women like Deborah Banks need help.

The 25-year-old check-out operator did not qualify for statutory maternity pay when she became pregnant with her second child, three years after starting work with Tesco's. She earned £55.93 a week, which was just below the ceiling for paying National Insurance (NI) contributions, currently set at £62. No NI contributions meant no maternity pay — not even the lower-level maternity allowance.

Some blame this iniquitous state of affairs on male legislators who appear to have assumed that women earning such small sums were doing so only for pin money. Yet today, when half of the women in the workforce are in part-time, temporary or self-employed work, and are sometimes the only family wage-earner, they need all the help they can get.

The Maternity Alliance has been attempting to expose this unfairness in court. Last year, it backed Deborah Banks's action against Tesco's and Peter Lilley, then Social Security Secretary, at an industrial tribunal. The target was not the supermarket, but the Government — for allegedly contravening Europe's equal-pay laws. A decision is still awaited, but Christine Gowdridge, director of the Maternity Alliance, believes that Harriet Harman's pronouncements this week on the iniquity of the system has effectively resolved the case they were prepared to take to Europe.

"The Government argued very strongly against us," she says, "but I presume that the case is won in effect. We welcome the fact that Ms Harman has recognised this unfairness in the system and is in part putting it right for lower-paid women."



So Deborah Banks should get her money, which will amount to some £700 — hardly a fortune, though it will help with some of the bills which burden a low-income family when children arrive. But does it mean that the Nicola Horlicks of the future should not be entitled to their maternity pay? In Mrs Horlick's case, the 90 per cent of her salary paid by the state would have amounted to £16,000 a week, for six weeks.

Some observers are suggesting that the Government is signalling a move towards capping maternity pay. The Maternity Alliance, for one, says such a direction is neither reasonable, cost-effective nor legal under European law.

At the moment, women who have earned on average enough to pay National Insurance contributions during the eight weeks between roughly their 18th and 25th week of pregnancy, and have been in the same employment without a break for at least 26 weeks, are entitled to 18 weeks' statutory maternity pay. The minimum laid down in law that they will receive is 90 per cent of their salary for six weeks, paid by the state. Then it drops to £55.70 for the last 12 weeks. Some enlightened employers top this up to full salary, but only one in ten women employees having babies are so lucky.

Women who have changed employers so that they have not clocked up their 26 weeks but still have a NI history will qualify for a separate benefit: the maternity allowance. Those in that situation who are employed until 15 weeks before the baby is born will get £55.70 a week. Those who are unemployed or self-employed get £48.35.

About 360,000 employees become pregnant each year. But of these, 50,000 women workers have earnings too low to entitle them to either of these benefits(1). They are increasing in numbers because they are cheap to employ. Lumped in with the very-low-earners are further anomalous cases, such as the Scottish teacher on a temporary contract whose baby was born at Christmas. Because the assessment period for her average earnings fell in the summer holidays, when she was unpaid, she received nothing.

The imposition of an earnings ceiling of £100,000 a year for statutory maternity pay, as has been mooted, is not the answer, says Christine Gowdridge. There are relatively few women earning that kind of salary but high-earners have expensive commitments, and the danger exists at top and bottom salary levels that, without maternity pay, women will feel compelled to return to work too early.

European law could also put a stop to capping. "The latest directive on pregnancy says there must be no reduction of existing rights if the Government changes maternity schemes," said Ms Gowdridge.

Then there are the practical problems that would come with the affluence-testing across a broad range of benefits were to be introduced. John Whiting, tax partner with the accountants Price Waterhouse, says that defining affluence would be a minefield. "A salary of £25,000 a year is regarded by some as riches — whereas others wouldn't get out of bed for that."

David Rothenberg, of the accountants Blick Rothenberg, says an affluence test would place a huge burden on the Inland Revenue and breach the unspoken contract governing people's expectations of return on their National Insurance contributions. "Why do you pay your contributions? The answer is to get a pension."

However, David Wright, of the independent financial advisers Johnstone Douglas, thinks a test would be relatively easy to devise. And he argues that National Insurance has lost its original purpose. "The Government should come clean about it," he says. "National Insurance has got the wrong name. For many years it has just been a tax, a method of collecting revenue to pay for today's benefits."

The poverty lobby, increasingly unhappy at Labour's direction on welfare reform, would also oppose any limits on universal benefits. According to the Child Poverty Action Group, ministers forget that the social-security system is supposed to prevent poverty — as well as relieve it. "National Insurance is a good stakeholding model where those who are able to make contributions have access to benefits at times when they need them," the group said yesterday. "It should not just be a matter of poor welfare for the poor."

THE most intriguing aspect of the apparent development in government thinking, however, is where it leaves Frank Field, Minister for Welfare Reform, who has been a long-standing critic of means-testing. In a speech(2) which he made in 1996, but which has been published under his name since the general election, Field said: "We hope we are now coming to an end of a period when the assumption that targeting benefits through means tests is both an effective mechanism for concentrating help on the poorest and an equally effective means of controlling public expenditure. Social security has become disfigured by the spread of means tests. In 1948, for each £10 paid in welfare, only £1 was means-tested. Now £1 in £3 is means-tested."

Means tests have a destructive impact, he said, acting as a penalty on work and a disincentive to save. The world is littered with countries reforming welfare by casually allowing the bottom 20 per cent of their societies to sink into segregated, means-tested, poor-law-type provision. "Merely to follow in the wake of these developments would be to surrender Labour's heritage," Field said. "If the party has stood for anything, it has been as a great force for an inclusive society."

Since coming into government, Field has made no secret of the fact that he wants to foster a revival of the principles of social insurance, based on friendly societies and similar organisations. His draft of the now overdue, green paper on welfare reform is rumoured to have been rejected by Downing Street at least in part because of an over-cerebral approach.

Pitching a policy on the basis of popular sentiment about the likes of Nicola Horlick smacks strongly of other influences. Field was yesterday reported to be "happier than for a long time". Given the well-known tensions over welfare reform in Whitehall, this may not be saying very much.

Sources: (1) DSS Briefing; (2) Allen Lane Memorial lecture 1996, included in Reforming Welfare by Frank Field (Social Market Foundation, 1997).
Graphics sources: DSS; ONS; Benefits Agency; PA.
Graphics: Steve Villiers.
Photographs: Maggie Murray.
Research: Mark Espiner.
Sarah Boseley is a Guardian reporter; David Brindle is social services correspondent.

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FinanceGuardian

MARKET TURMOIL: Tokyo discloses £348bn lending mountain ● US stems shares collapse

Japan's loan crisis grows

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

THE enormity of the task of rebuilding the battered Japanese economy was highlighted yesterday when the Finance Ministry disclosed the nation's banks were saddled with 76.7 trillion yen (£348 billion) in loans — three times higher than admitted.

This compares with Britain's big banks which have provisions of around £2 billion to cover for bad debts.

The financial turmoil elsewhere in Asia could push the total in Japan even higher as Japanese banks have outstanding loans of $265 billion (£165 billion) in the region and many of those are in danger of turning sour.

The sharp increase follows the adoption of a new system of assessing problem loans based more closely on strict international standards, rather than the Japanese banks' own looser criteria, which have long since lost their credibility.

To scotch the bankruptcy rumours that have plagued the Japanese financial sector and contributed to the rash of collapses, the government has also pressed banks and credit organisations to make more realistic disclosures about their outstanding loans.

Under the new system, banks estimated that 2.7 trillion yen in loans was "irrecoverable", 8.7 trillion yen "at high risk" and 65.3 trillion yen "questionable." The Bank of Japan forecasts that nearly a fifth of the questionable loans will turn bad.

In a sign of the sense of urgency, the Diet was convened a week earlier than originally scheduled to enable politicians to debate the nation's economic woes. For the first time since the Gulf War, prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto opened the new session yesterday with a speech on the crisis, rather than the traditional broad policy outline.

Mr Hashimoto sought Diet support for a government package of measures to stabilise the financial system, which include a one-off 2 trillion yen income tax cut and a 30 trillion yen commitment to protect depositors of failed institution with public funds.

In his speech and in later talks with prime minister Tony Blair, who is visiting Japan, Mr Hashimoto reaffirmed an earlier pledge not to allow the nation's problems to trigger a global depression.

"I am determined to prevent a financial or economic panic sparked by Japan, to stabilise the financial system and to restore confidence in the future of the economy," he told legislators.

Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuzuka also outlined a series of measures to ease the credit crunch, which has contributed to the economic slowdown and the rise in corporate failures.

He postponed for one year the introduction of stricter capital-adequacy ratios for banks and promised to make 25 trillion yen available to small businesses that have suffered from a lack of liquidity because of banks' reluctant to extend fresh loans.

However, the lack of any new steps to stimulate demand left the markets cold, driving down the key Nikkei index of shares on the Tokyo stock market by 2.21 per cent to 14,664.44, its lowest point in two and a half years.

The Japanese currency also lost ground against the dollar in Tokyo yesterday, falling during the afternoon to 132.28, weakening by almost one yen from last Friday.



Reporters surround Peregrine spokesman Tom Grimmer yesterday as he announces that the Hong Kong investment bank is filing for liquidation PHOTOGRAPH: PETER PARKS

'Forces of light' bring global rout to a halt

Mark Milner
Deputy Financial Editor

WALL STREET last night halted a threatened rout of global stock markets after share prices in Asia and Europe had earlier taken a hammering.

Both the Singapore and Hong Kong markets fell more than 8 per cent overnight, while more than £20 billion was wiped off the value of the London market at one point as the FTSE 100 index plunged almost 150 points.

New York looked set to follow suit in early dealings as the Dow Jones industrial average fell more than 130 points but it rallied and was 50 points up by lunchtime. This helped sentiment in Europe, with the FTSE recovering some ground to close down 69.5 points at 5068.8.

"The forces of light have finally returned to Wall Street," said one fund manager. *The Dow rally continued*, closing 66 points up last night.

The renewed turbulence was sparked by a combination of worries about the Indonesian economy and the fall of one of Asia's top investment banks, Peregrine Investment Holdings. The Hong Kong firm applied for liquidation after efforts to put together a rescue failed.

Peregrine's fate left executives pondering the failure of one of its biggest customers to live up to its name. Central to its problems was a $400 million portfolio of loans to Indonesian companies — *a large* chunk of which had gone to the Steady Safe taxi company.

The problems came to a head when Zurich Centre Investments, an offshoot of Zurich Group, abandoned plans to invest $200 million in Peregrine and weekend efforts to find other investors proved fruitless.

Peregrine is the latest victim of the economic problems which have bedevilled Asia since last summer. It lent dollars to companies in Indonesia which they were unable to *repay after the catastrophic* fall of the rupiah against the US currency.

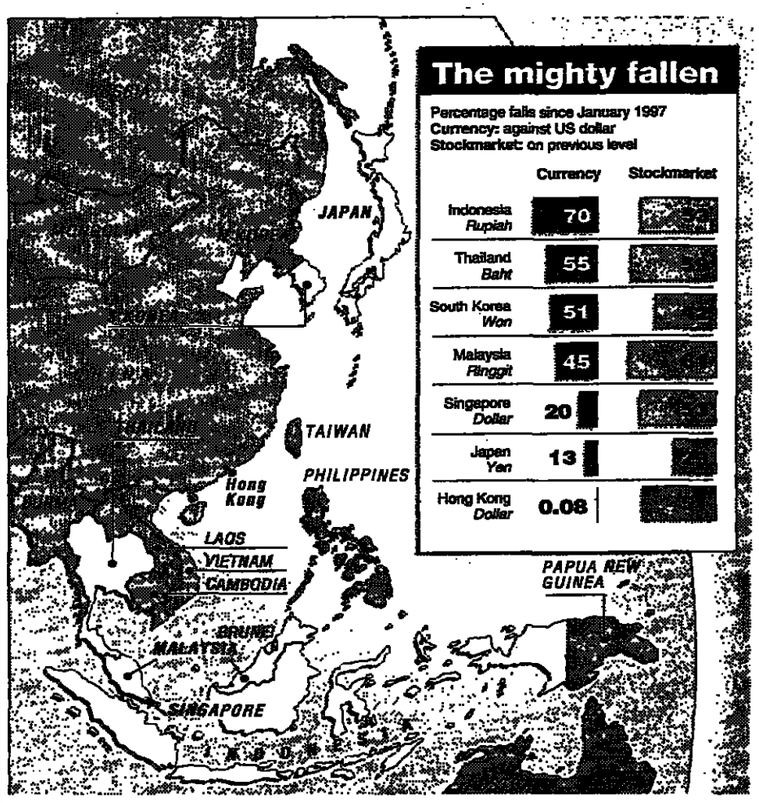
Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa appealed for calm in Hong Kong financial markets and said the Peregrine crisis would have minimal impact on banks.

Despite the calm reaction of New York to the deepening crisis in Asia, investors remain on the alert for further bad news. "There's just a lot of uncertainty as to how long, how severe and how much of an impact the problems *overseas will have*," according to the chief market analyst at one US broker.

The news from Asia was not universally gloomy. The Korean won and share prices in Seoul strengthened as IMF managing director Michel Camdessus said he was satisfied by the implementation of the reform package imposed on South Korea as the price of a $57 billion IMF bail-out.

Fidelity Investments, part of the world's largest fund manager, last night urged investors not to sell Asian stocks at such *low levels. Executive director* Paul Kafka said: "For the brave investor, market corrections like those being experienced in South-east Asia can present buying opportunities. We would encourage investors not to panic or to sell out at these relatively low levels. For those with a long-term investment horizon, stock market levels could present an opportunity to capitalise on market over-reaction."





IMF trusts Indonesia reform to succeed

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Jakarta

IMF DEPUTY managing director Stanley Fischer emerged in buoyant mood from a meeting with Indonesia's President Suharto yesterday *raising the prospect* that the government would announce reforms that could help to restore the shattered confidence in its economy.

After 90 minutes of talks with the beleaguered 76-year-old Mr Suharto, Mr Fischer said: "The president was very, very clear in his determination to stay with the [IMF] programme and to strengthen it and accelerate it."

The "very, very good" meeting follows weeks of gloom in the financial community over goverment backsliding on its commitments under the IMF's $40 billion rescue effort.

Some announcement of new reforms is likely when the IMF managing director, Michel Camdessus, now visiting South Korea, arrives in Jakarta. The likelihood of tough reform helped to make Indonesia's rupiah *a haven from* the plunging currencies elsewhere in East Asia yesterday. After falling to 10,500 rupiahs to the dollar last week, it was trading yesterday at about 8,500.

A currency analyst in Singapore said: "People are nervous that the US is going to twist the arm of the Suharto government; they don't want to be short of rupiahs when there's an announcement."

Notebook

Asian fall-out leaves Europe counting cost



Alex Brummer

THE Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer may have felt he had little choice but to pronounce all is well following the monthly meeting in Basle of the world's top central bankers.

Sure, there has been a flight to quality, as he pointed out, with bond prices strengthening in the larger industrial countries, but it should be more than clear to Dr Tietmeyer by now that what is taking place in Asia is not *some dot on a distant horizon.*

Robust growth in Europe and the US, and the underlying strength of the Group of Seven financial institutions, could be endangered.

A glance at the latest developments indicates the scale of the crisis. Hong Kong is back *in the limelight* with the decline in the Hang Seng gathering momentum in yesterday's trading when it dropped 8 per cent. The impact of Hong Kong's difficulties is plainly being felt on the London Stock Exchange where there is so much exposure to the former territory: among the heavy sufferers are HSBC and Standard Chartered.

But they are by no means alone. Inchcape shares and Diageo shares have tumbled, Mulberry directors are taking a pay cut and Marks & Spencer, among others, is finding *trading conditions difficult.*

In Hong Kong, the collapse of Peregrine, the territory's only home-grown investment bank, is a huge blow to prestige and confidence. The link between the US dollar and the Hong Kong dollar — the underpinning of Hong Kong's monetary policy — looks increasingly tenuous.

Indonesia now has a full blown crisis which is bringing almost every financial expert involved in controlling the Asian epidemic to Jakarta — from the IMF's deputy managing director Stanley Fischer to its arch-intellectual *opponent Jeffrey Sachs of the* Harvard Institute, who is advising Indonesia's government.

As soon one problem retreats, the collapse of the South Korean won, another appears. Even the US defence secretary William Cohen has arrived, fearful perhaps that the implosion of the Suharto regime could damage US security interests in the Pacific.

All of this may seem a long way from Europe as Dr Tietmeyer's comments in Basle indicated. But not for long. The fall in UK industrial production in November, before the Asian difficulties were at their worst, can be partly attributed to the strong pound and loss of Asian markets.

Much of Europe's growth in the 1990s has been based on exports to the region — from power stations to telecoms systems.

The one positive piece of fall-out from all of this is that Britain's own domestic tightening, which has brought costlier borrowing, more expensive mortgage rates and a higher pound, may be easing.

Sterling money markets are signalling for the first time in more than 18 months that the next move in short-term UK base rates will be down rather than up. That might seem like a cheering development, but it could also signal a much harder landing for Britain's economic expansion than the Government has admitted.

Frankfurt control

SEEN from Frankfurt it would make a great deal of sense for Deutsche Bank, Europe's largest, to bring its City-based investment banking arm Deutsche Morgan Grenfell (DMG) together with its commercial banking operations.

With the world of investment banking increasingly dominated by a handful of super banks like United Bank of Switzerland (the combination of SBC Warburg and UBS) and Morgan Stanley the main players need all the captured clients they can muster to compete successfully.

So it makes absolute sense for Deutsche Bank to use its commercial relationships to bring on board new clients for investment banking.

All of this makes particular sense in the case of DMG, which has been on an expensive expansion drive without producing, so far, the commensurate returns. This is *partly due to the hit which* DMG took as a result of rogue manager Peter Young's activities at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.46	France 9.56	Italy 2,838	Singapore 2.84
Austria 20.13	Germany 2.86	Malta 0.6261	South Africa 7.81
Belgium 59.04	Greece 454.57	Netherlands 3.21	Spain 241.21
Canada 2.25	Hong Kong 12.14	New Zealand 2.77	Sweden 12.69
Cyprus 0.84	India 84.06	Norway 11.78	Switzerland 2.31
Denmark 10.98	Ireland 1.14	Portugal 292.63	Turkey 327,880
Finland 8.74	Israel 5.74	Saudi Arabia 5.96	USA 1.5778

Supplied by National Bank (excluding Indian rates and Israeli shekel)

Banks in peril as Tigers' jaws tighten

OUTLOOK/Lisa Buckingham on the performance of lenders during crisis

BEING a banker in Asia at the moment has all the potential job satisfaction of sticking your head in the mouth of a tiger. Weighing up who will lose their heads and who will emerge to a huge ovation is exactly what stock markets are trying to do for international banking groups in the region, such as HSBC and Standard Chartered.

The Cassandras were in full voice yesterday spurred on by events of the past few days in Hong Kong. Robert Law, banking analyst at Lehman Brothers, yesterday published a savage 1998 profits downgrade for both groups, and another investment house is understood to be considering cutting further its profits estimates.

Mr Law argues that the Hong Kong authorities' determination to defend the peg against the dollar could precipitate sizeable falls in asset values, leading to higher bad debts for lenders. And if the Hong Kong dollar is not allowed to fall, that would reduce the impact of local currency depreciation on reported profits.

Clearly, corporate loans in a region which looks set for a string of bankruptcies, carry a growing risk almost whatever the quality of the loan book. Lehman Brothers is working on a £1 billion bad debt provision from HSBC for its Far Eastern loans or 1.6 per cent of its entire lending. The book value of the banks will also fall thanks to currency declines.

Shares in Standard Chartered have fallen by more than half and are valued as though there will be virtually no growth throughout the region for the next five years. Even pessimists do not expect the former tiger economies to tread water for that long.

Little wonder, therefore, if Standard Chartered is on bid alert, particularly as senior executives appear unable to stop themselves exuding confidence that their controls will see them through the worst.

Figures for 1997 will shed very little light on the banks' potential problems. It seems that next month Standard Chartered will announce £800 to £850 million profits, slightly below the previous year.

But it is the current year which poses the big questions. Consumer activity in the Asia Pacific region will be lower than before and this will affect the expansion of business for Standard Chartered and HSBC. It will also raise questions about longer term strategy, particularly that of HSBC which has cruised through recent years on the promise of little other than organic growth in the region.

On the up side, the Asian market melt-down could open up opportunities for acquisition for both banks. It has already prompted a surge of activity from corporate clients seeking to hedge currencies formerly pegged to the US dollar. The banking groups' currency dealers are also thought to be making profits from the turbulence.

Heavyweight banking players can also expect to benefit from the traditional accompaniment of uproar, a "*flight to quality*", and with money becoming a somewhat scarcer commodity, loan margins are improving. Scarcely sufficient to offset the impact of macro-economic turbulence but enough to offer hope for the longer term.

هكذا من الاصل

Racing

Chris Hawkins finds trainer Charlie Egerton has plenty to be happy about as the Cheltenham Festival countdown begins

Champion boost for Shadow Leader

CHARLIE EGERTON, trainer of leading Champion Hurdle hope Shadow Leader, took a great deal of satisfaction from watching Graphic Equaliser toy with competitive opposition in Saturday's Ladbroke Hurdle at Leopardstown.

It was a victory which reaffirmed Shadow Leader's class, Graphic Equaliser having been beaten nearly 20 lengths by him in the Supreme Novice Hurdle at Cheltenham last season. *No doubt* the firm ground that day favoured Shadow Leader, but you can understand why Egerton was pleased by the Leopardstown result.

"Graphic Equaliser is some horse judged on that and obviously likes soft ground," said Egerton. "I'm itching to give Shadow Leader another run, but where and when depends on the weather — I don't want to bottom him on heavy ground."

Shadow Leader was beaten, of course, on such a surface on his reappearance at Kempton over Christmas when failing to catch Kerawi. "I'm not worried about that defeat," explained Egerton.

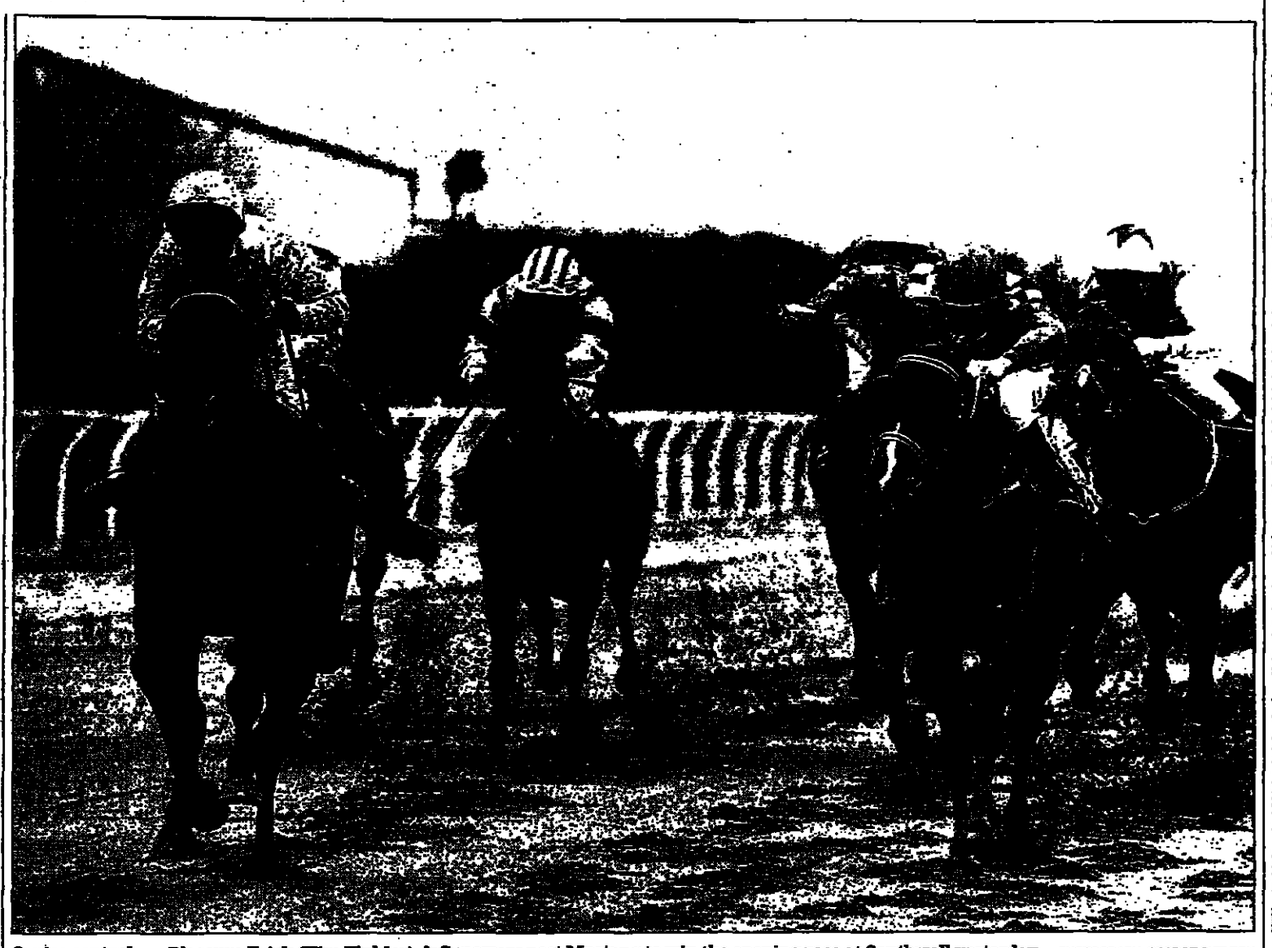
"*The ground, the slow pace* and the fact that Shadow Leader was too well all contributed. By too well, I mean he was too fresh and travelled so well in the race that he got there too soon."

Ideally, Egerton would like to give Shadow Leader two runs before the Cheltenham Festival and has him entered for the Irish Champion (very doubtful), the Haydock Park Trial, the Agfa Hurdle at Sandown, *the Tote Gold Trophy* at Newbury and the Kingwell Hurdle at Wincanton.

"As I said, the going will decide things. I wouldn't rule out taking on Graphic Equaliser and Kerawi again at Newbury *if the ground dried up*," added the trainer, who is quite satisfied by Shadow Leader's progress.

"He doesn't show a lot at home to be honest — and I admit he has surprised me by *how good he has turned out* to be on the track — but he takes plenty of work and has a tough constitution."

It is hardly surprising that at the moment Egerton sees the Aidan O'Brien-trained favourite *Istabraq as the big* danger in the Champion.



Cruise control . . . Pleasure Trick (Kim Tinkler), left, powers past Mustang to win the opening race at Southwell yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE SHELTON

"When I saw him last season *he looked unfurnished* and appeared to have improvement in him," he commented.

"Speaking from afar, I would say he's made that improvement, but I think in the Champion the ground will be *the deciding factor. The faster* it is, the more it will be to our advantage."

Entries for the Smurfit Champion Hurdle do not close until next Monday, but the Queen Mother Two Mile *Champion Chase and the Tote* Gold Cup closed yesterday. One Man is not among the 38 *entries for the Gold Cup*, but is being aimed instead at the Champion Chase, for which 19 were declared, including last year's winner Martha's Son, who has been sidelined since November with a *muscle injury*.

Hill's have reinstated Martha's Son into their betting at 6–1. Ask Tom and Viking Flagship are the 7–2 joint-favourites, with Klairon Davis and One Man (from 5–1) also on 6's.

Ask Tom heads 14 acceptors for Saturday's £40,000 Victor *Chandler Handicap Chase at* Ascot. He is 12–1 with Coral, who go 9–2 Or Royal, 11–2 Lord Dorcet and Mulligan, 6–1 Arctic Kinsman, 7–1 Celibate and Cumbrian Challenge, 8–1 Leotard and Jeffell.

A decision *on* Ask Tom's participation will be made later this week, but Charlie Mann reports last month's impressive course and distance winner Celibate a definite runner.

"This race has always been the plan," he said. "Either Richard Dunwoody or Mick Fitzgerald will ride."

Among the Tote Gold Cup entries is Danoli, who has not run since falling three from home in last season's race when he damaged the fetlock he had fractured at Aintree in 1995.

Tom Foley, his trainer, had good news of Ireland's favourite horse yesterday. He said: "I'm very happy with him and hope to run in the Hennessy next month. The main aim is the Gold Cup and, although he's the sort of horse that puts plenty into his work, if I think he needs another run after Leopardstown then there's the Red Mills Chase at Gowran Park."

In an open looking year, Danoli can be backed at 33–1 with Hill's, who have four 7–1 co-favourites: Dorans Pride, Imperial Call, The Grey Monk and Suny Bay.

Possibly the most intriguing entry is American Eclipse Award winning chaser Lonesome Glory, who was clipped from 33–1 to 25–1 by Coral yesterday.

Rugby League

Lindsay duo raises spectre of breakaway

Andy Wilson

MAURICE LINDSAY and Chris Caisley, the odd couple who are now managing director and chairman respectively of Super League Europe, yesterday hinted that they might negotiate the game's next television contract themselves.

This prospect will fuel fears that they would lead an elite breakaway from the Rugby Football League. Lindsay, it will be remembered, sealed the existing five-year £87 million deal with News Corporation in 1995, when he was the RFL's chief executive.

Speaking at Headingley after his appointment was confirmed by the 12 Super League clubs, Lindsay said: "There are contractual partners here who are News Corporation — let's wait and see where they want to go."

Caisley, a Leeds solicitor who is also chairman of the Bradford Bulls, added: "It is inconceivable that anybody who wants to approach the *game would not have discussions* with the Super League."

Caisley and Lindsay also want to play the leading role when Super League membership for 1999 is determined for the first time on a franchise basis, *with new teams* expected from South Wales and Scotland. Super League Europe already has responsibility for finding a new sponsor for the competition following the withdrawal of Bass last year.

Lindsay revealed that he had turned down a previous offer from Caisley to move to Super League; the two have clashed on numerous occasions in the past. "We are both strong-willed personalities but we have always agreed on the big picture," said Caisley.

St Helens, Salford and the London Broncos may all have their pre-season planning disrupted by the Department for Education and Employment. All three clubs have signed Australians who played for Paris last season — Jamie Olejnik, Phil Bergman and Deon Bird respectively — but the DfEE is refusing to recognise those appearances for work-permit purposes because the players were in France on tourist visas.

The restrictions could also affect Dewsbury, the First Division club who have agreed deals with David O'Donnell and Paul Evans.

Swinton Lions have signed Ian Blease, the Salford forward banned *sine die* last year for assaulting a touch-judge but on appeal cleared to play *from March 31*. Swinton have also recaptured Paul Barrow, the forward they sold to Warrington for £60,000 only 16 months ago; Barrow is also serving a suspension, which expires in three months.

Iestyn Harris hopes to play rugby union for Wales in next year's World Cup. The brilliant 21-year-old Wales and Leeds stand-off, signed for £350,000 from Warrington last year, wants permission to play both codes next season.

Boxing

Leonard pulls out of bout

John Rawling

SUGAR RAY LEONARD has backed out of a fight planned for February 15 in Sydney, prompting speculation that his ring career is finally at an end.

The 41-year-old former champion in five weight divisions from welterweight through to light-heavyweight had been due to take on the American Tony Menefee in Australia. Menefee is ranked No. 3 at light-middleweight with the World Boxing Association.

Leonard was thought to have been working towards a fourth meeting with his old rival, the Panamanian Roberto Duran.

Leonard's American promoter Mike Acri said: "I don't know what's wrong with him. He'd agreed to fight, the money was right. Everything was OK with our deal.

"Then 24 hours before he was scheduled for a satellite television press conference in Los Angeles, he just turns around and says he's not fighting."

It would have been Leonard's first fight since suffering an embarrassing five-round stoppage defeat against Hector Camacho in Atlantic City last March, in his first contest after a six-year lay-off from boxing.

Richie Woodhall's challenge for the World Boxing Council super-middleweight title, held by the veteran South African Thulane "Sugarboy" Malinga, has been rescheduled for March 7 at Telford Ice Rink.

The 29-year-old former European middleweight champion failed in his previous attempt to win a world title when he was stopped by the WBC middleweight champion Keith Holmes in October, 1996.

● Joe Bugner, who went the distance with Muhammad Ali in 1975, climbs into the ring again today at the age of 47. Bugner is trying to regain the Australian heavyweight title on Queensland's Gold Coast from Colin Wilson, 22 years his junior. The former British, Commonwealth and European heavyweight champion, who last fought in 1996, has promised that if he loses he will retire — again.

Time for Wakeham to show some bite

RUMBLINGS within racing over the last year have suggested dissatisfaction with the performance of the British Horseracing Board and, more particularly, the leadership of chairman Lord Wakeham, *writes Chris Hawkins*.

Whether it is apt or not, the phrase "busy doing nothing" springs to mind. It does seem to have taken an age for the BHB to formulate its financial plan for the attempted salvation of a struggling industry.

Details of the famous plan, which is said to set out the long-term need of an extra £105 million a year, are due to be revealed at the BHB Industry Committee's annual forum in London tomorrow.

Wakeham *no doubt has* his own views about the viability of such a plan and, if recent leaks are accurate, he is not optimistic.

Some will argue that this is hardly surprising in view of his own lack of dynamism and even interest in racing.

It is common knowledge and considerable understatement to say that Peter Savill, a prominent member of the *Industry Committee*, and Wakeham do not see eye to eye but, for the sake of unity, a public slanging match between the two is unlikely tomorrow.

At last year's forum Savill was slapped down by Wakeham, whose hard political background showed through.

Make no mistake, beneath the charm this man *knows how to slug it out*, but so far there has been no manifest indication of him fighting racing's corner with relish.

Perhaps he has as yet had little to get his teeth into. This plan *may* give him that opportunity.

This evening Wakeham, Savill and the BHB's chief executive Tristram Rickett will explain the plan to the All Party Racing Committee *in the House of* Commons.

● In advance of the publication of the International Classifications later today, bookmakers Coral report renewed interest in King of *Kings at 12–1 for the 2,000* Guineas.

"We already have massive liabilities on King of Kings and another surge of interest in Aidan O'Brien's colt would see his price plummet," said Simon Clare, Coral spokesman.

Paradise lost as stewards deprive Cowell of first win

ROBERT COWELL, who trained three winners in Los Angeles before taking out a licence here two months ago, was denied his first domestic victory when Mr Paradise was disqualified at Southwell yesterday, *writes Ron Cox*.

Willie Ryan's mount passed the post first in the Wicklow Handicap, but hung left as he took the lead approaching the final furlong and hampered Godmersham Park, who was awarded the prize at the subsequent stewards' enquiry.

Cowell took this setback on the chin: "Willie thought he was far enough ahead when my horse edged across, but the stewards felt otherwise. That's how it goes and hopefully we might break our duck with Mary Cornwallis in the last race at Lingfield tomorrow," he said.

Cowell has certainly found a bad race for Mary Cornwallis, but he might have to wait a little longer for his first winner here as Vista Alegre (3.30) looks the one to be on.

Narrowly beaten by a useful type in Shegardi here last time, Vista Alegre can complete a quick double for her trainer Peter Makin, whose wide-margin course winner Diamond Drill (3.00) should be too good for Blue Shadow in the Shanklin Handicap.

Results

TODAY'S scheduled meeting at Leicester was cancelled after a morning inspection yesterday. Clerk of the course Nick Lees said: "The hurdles course is heavy in places, but some parts are waterlogged and unsafe."

Leicester is the 12th meeting to be lost to waterlogging this month and the 23rd to fall to the weather this season.

SOUTHWELL

12.30 (7f): 1, PLEASURE TRICK, Kim Tinkler (12–1); 2, Mustang (7–1); 3, Mr Sheringham (4–1). 11–4 fav Theatre Magic. 12 ran 1¾, 1¼. (Don Enrico Incisa) Tote: £16.40; £5.40, £2.00, £2.00. Dual F: £61.40. Trio: £100.00 CSF: £80.21. Tricast: £378.15.

1.00 (1m): 1, PRINCIPAL BOY, S Carson (5–1); 2, Lady Silk, (14–1); 3, Mistressy Mistuky (14–1); 4, Love Prospect (15–2). 7–2 fav Time of Night. 16 ran ¾, 1¾, 3, . (J Glover) Tote: £8.50; £1.40, £4.10, £3.10, £3.00. Dual F: £84.80. Trio: £153.80. CSF: £86.85. Tricast: £912.86.

1.30 (1m): 1, GODDERSHAW PARK, Dean McKeown (9–1 Jt Fav); 2, Mr Parkline (8–2); 3, Cheerful Groom (25–1). 3–1 jt-fav Mutahadeth. 11 ran Shd, 4. (P Felgate) Tote: £4.60; £2.30, £1.70, £11.00. Dual F: £7.00. Trio: £183.10. CSF: £16.75. Tricast: £288.91. Following a stewards' inquiry, the first and second placings were reversed.

2.00 (6f): 1, FAST FRANC, L Charnock (11–4); 2, Touchasrose (5–2); 3, Pearly Queene (11–8 fav). 5 ran 6, shd. (S Williams) Tote: £3.00; £1.80, £1.70. Dual F: £6.60. CSF: £9.35.

2.30 (1m 4f): 1, DALWHINNIE, A McCarthy (4–5 Fav); 2, Lalos Jurio (33–1); 3, Trifecta Bill (20–1). 8 ran 15, 3¼. (J Wharton) Tote: £1.60; £1.10, £16.10, £3.80. Dual F: £28.10. CSF: £39.54.

3.00 (1m 3f): 1, ALSANIB, C Lowther (6–1); 2, Chime Castle (2–1); 3, Dr Bilger (12–1). 12 ran Nk, ¾. (W Muir) Tote: £7.30; £1.90, £1.80, £4.10. Dual F: £8.80. Trio: £120.80. CSF: £17.40. Tricast: £137.00.

3.30 (1m): 1, EMPEROR'S GOLD, A Mackay (7–4 fav); 2, Mystery Man (16–1); 3, Silk Folio (5–1). 9 ran 2¾, 1¾. (I Campbell) Tote: £2.30; £1.10, £2.80, £2.70. Dual F: £20.80. CSF: £25.18. NR: Hamilaca.

4.00 (1m): 1, CHALUZ, P Dobbs (9–2 fav); 2, Shenekina (6–1); 3, Genuine John (5–1). 14 ran 1¾, 1¾. (K Burke) Tote: £7.60; £2.90, £2.60. £1.70. Dual F: £21.80. Trio: £62.80. CSF: £38.02. Tricast: £178.19. NR: Ring The Chief.

JACKPOT: Not won. £2,970.58 carried forward to Lingfield.

PLACEPOT: £63.60. **QUADPOT:** £14.10.

PLUMPTON

1.15 (2m 1f Hdle): 1, DUKE'S MOUNT, R Johnson (100–30); 2, Ile de Liberdip (9–1); 3, Pinkerton's Pal (25–1). 8–13 fav Tamerindo. 13 ran 3, 10. (D Nicholson) Tote: £4.50; £1.20, £1.60, £4.10. Dual F: £14.60. Trio: £47.40. CSF: £28.01.

1.45 (2m 6f Chs): 1, BOB DEVANE, Mr O McPhail (16–1); 2, Solstice (9–2); 3, Court Minstrel (3–1). 9–4 fav Oliver's Secret. 5 ran 11, 5. (T George) Tote: £17.00; £3.30, £1.40. £1.40. Dual F: £30.80. CSF: £76.22. Tricast: £282.83.

2.15 (2m 4f Hdle): 1, TAKE MY SIDE, R Thornton (25–1); 2, Bronze (4–1); 3, Fortree (7–2). 5–2 fav Silent Cracker. 13 ran 13, 4. (M Roberts) Tote: £30.50; £9.90, £2.90, £1.30. Dual F: £139.60. Trio: £188.40. CSF: £115.77.

2.45 (2m 1f Ch): 1, LETS RUMBLE, P Holley (11–2); 2, Scotby (5–1); 3, Granilla Agate (7–4 fav). 9 ran 25, 1¾. (R Alner) Tote: £8.70; £2.80, £1.10, £1.30. Dual F: £11.20. Trio: £12.40. CSF: £30.80.

3.15 (2m 4f Hdle): 1, ROYALE ANGELA, R Johnson (11–4); 2, Caboolture (9–2); 3, Brave Battle (9–1). 13–8 Fav Tonka. 7 ran 3, 7. (J Neville) Tote: £4.80; £1.50, £2.30. Dual F: £5.80. CSF: £13.72. Tricast: £86.84. NR: Copper Coil.

3.45 (2m 1f Ch): 1, PRINCE BUCK, A P McCoy (5–1); 2, Steeple Jack (16–1); 3, Madame Maximum (12–1). 17–2 fav Ourownfellow. 11 ran 3¼, dist. (M Roberts) Tote: £4.10; £2.20, £5.10, £3.70. Dual F: £458.50. Trio: £200.10. CSF: £47.91. Tricast: £485.92. PLACEPOT: £117.90. QUADPOT: £27.20.

Lingfield Jackpot card with form guide

	RON COX	TOP FORM
1.00	Jubilee Scholar	Sea Dancing
1.30	Night City	Night City (nb)
2.00	Lady Lapisrouig	Racingmillion (nap)
2.30	Plain Sailing	Half Term
3.00	Diamond Drill (nap)	Diamond Drill
3.30	Vista Alegre (nb)	Vista Alegre

All-weather, Equitrack, left-handed course laid out inside turf track and only 1¾m round. No straight sprint track.

Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rated. Draws: No advantage.

Long distance travellers: Island Vision (1.30) J O'Shea, H'ford & Worcs 170 miles. Averham Star (3.00) D Shaw, Notts 162 miles. Sound The Trumpet (2.30) R Spicer, Lincs 135 miles. Friendly Brave (2.30) Gay Kelleway, Dorset 130 miles.

Seven day winners: 1.00 Chalmers Choice. 1.30 English Invader.

Blinkered first time: 2.00 Recognition, Sammy's Shuffle. Wearside: None.

Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J...Jumps.

1.00 NEWPORT APPRENTICE HANDICAP 1m 2f £2,232 (6 declared)

101 (3) 0061-1 **Chalcanas Choice** (D) (Bb av) (CD) A Jarvis 8–10–6 C Carver (3) 82
102 (5) 0260-2 **Quiet Arch** (14) (CD) W Muir 5–9–12 J Weaver (3) ●86
103 (2) 1430-4 **Star Dancing** (10) (CD) J Bridger 5–9–12 R Hutchinson (3) ●●86
104 (6) 28152- **Jubilee Scholar** (25) (CD) (BF) S L Moore 5–8–8 M Baird (3) ★ 87
105 (1) 5020-4 **Sonnas Stroller** (7) (D) R Pocock 7–7–12 S Righton (3) 82
106 (4) 0600-3 **Fancy Design** (7) P Mitchell 5–7–10 A McCarthy (3) 83

Betting: 5–2 Quiet Arch, 7–2 Star Dancing, Jubilee Scholar, 5–2 Chalcanas Choice, 6–1 Fancy Design, 9–1 Queens Stroller.

FORM GUIDE – Chalcanas Choice: Made all, ridden clear 2f out, ran on, beating Joseph's Wine 5l at Lingfield 1m2f clsfic, AW, Quiet Arch: Held up, chased winner over 2f out, strong challenge final furlong, ran on, 2nd of 11, 3l behind Toujours Riviere, with Star Dancing (nine lbs) 6l back, headed 3f out, every chance, weakened inside final furlong, 4th, 2m 6l, at Lingfield 1m4f hcap, AW. Jubilee Scholar: Chased winner over 2f out, every chance final 2f, ran on well, 2nd of 14, 1¼ behind Legal Issue at Lingfield 1m2f hcap, AW. Sonnas Stroller: Hard ridden over 3f out, headway over 1f out, never nearer, 4th of 9, 4l behind Square Mile Miss at Lingfield 1m nrace, AW. Fancy Design: Well behind over 4f, good headway over 1f out, ran on well final furlong, 3rd of 9, 1l behind Dads Rock at Lingfield 7f 9lh hcap, AW.

1.30 YARMOUTH CLAIMING STAKES 1m 5f £2,739 (5 declared)

201 (3) 21303/ **Island Vision** (329) (D) J O'Shea 8–8–10 Martin Smith (7) —
202 (1) 0101-3 **Night City** (10) (CD) (BF) K Burke 7–9–10 D Sweeney (3) ●●86
203 (5) 1 **Notice of The Blue** (10) (D) M R Bosley 6–8–2 R Studholme (7) 78
204 (4) 0/05-42 **Time Can Tell** (9) J W Payne 4–9–1 Dane McKeown 84
205 (3) 0000-1 **English Investor** (7) (bl) C Dwyer 7–9–0 S Sanders 87

Betting: 5–11 Night City, 7–2 Time Can Tell, 6–2 English Investor, 9–1 Return Of The Mac, 14–1 Island Vision.

FORM GUIDE – Island Vision: Tried of 15, 6l behind Sounds Perfect at Nottingham 1m4f hcap, Gd-Fm; well beaten over hurdles recently. Night City: Always prominent, every chance over 2f out, soon ridden, one pace, 3rd of 11, 5l behind Toujours Riviere at Lingfield 1m4f hcap, AW. Return Of The Mac: Led halfway, headed over 1f out, rallied final behind Toujours Riviere at Lingfield 1m4f hcap, AW. Return Of The Mac: Led halfway, headed over 1f out, rallied final furlong, just over 5l out, ridden out, beating Krayon Dawn 2l at Lingfield 1m5f sell hcap, AW.

2.00 VENTNOR SELLING STAKES 3YO 7f £1,839 (8 declared)

301 (3) 30054- **Figaldo** (28) S Dow 8–11 S Sanders ★ 81
302 (8) 200-00 **Rainbow** (9) R Ingram 8–11 A McGlone + —
303 (2) 243-64 **Recognition** (4) M Pelgrave 8–11 Amanda Sanders ★ ●90
304 (4) 000-0 **Sammy's Shuffle** (8) R Flower 8–11 Dane O'Neill + —
305 (7) 6556/- **Dixie Crossroads** (183) S Dow 8–6 Martin Dwyer 88
306 (1) 64032- **Lady Lapisrouig** (28) W Muir 8–6 C Lowther (7) —
307 (6) - **Little Imp** L Bates 8–5 J Mackay 78
308 (5) 030-04 **River Frontier** (9) M Usher 8–6 J Weaver 78

Betting: 2–1 Lady Lapisrouig, 9–4 Figaldo, 4–1 Recognition, 11–2 Dixie Crossroads, 10–1 River Frontier, 20–1 Little Imp, 25–1 Rainbow, 33–1 Sammy's Shuffle.

FORM GUIDE – Figaldo: Last place 4l out, rallied final furlong, ran on well, 4th of 7, 13l behind Mnja's Magic at Lingfield 5f hcap, AW. Rainbow: Rallied final 4f, 5th of 10, 32l behind Snow And Ice at Lingfield 1m nrace, AW. Recognition: Soon in touch, headway to chase leaders over 2f out, not quicken, 4th of 9, 2l behind Sheila's A Gem at Southwell 7f sell, AW. Sammy's Shuffle: Led 1f, weakened over 5f out, 9th of 10, 25l behind Snow And Ice at Lingfield 1m nrch, AW. Dixie Crossroads: Held up mid-division, behind final 2f, 11th of 14, 14l behind Wildcat at Salisbury 7f clmh, Gd-Fm. Lady Lapisrouig: Led after 2f, headed near finish, 2nd of 15, 4l behind Pip's Addition at Southwell 7f 9lh sell, AW. Little Imp: top Society Lily, half-sister to two winners and out of a winning mare. River Frontier: Chased leaders, ridden 3f out, soon outpaced, 6l/ 4th behind Scotland Boy at Lingfield 7f hcap, AW.

2.30 RYDE HANDICAP 5f £2,779 (9 declared)

401 (7) 558-25 **Half Term** (10) (CD) R Flower 5–9–11 Dane O'Neill ★ ●90
402 (9) 42550- **The Institute Boy** (343) (CD) K Burke 8–9–10 D Sweeney (3) 87
403 (4) 631-34 **Friendly Brave** (9) (CD) Gay Kelleway 8–9–5 R Hughes ★ 84
404 (8) 000-03 **Plain Sailing** (6) J Bridger 5–8–4 J Quinn 85
405 (3) 050-04 **Ivory's Grab Him** (7) (CD) K Ivory 6–8–3 Martin Dwyer ★ 85
406 (5) 00352- **Sandbox** (12) (D) R Pearce 4–8–12 C Lowther (3) 84
407 (1) 1206-5 **Gold Dot** (18) (D) G L Moore 3–8–5 Candy Morris ★ —
408 (2) 63000- **Sound The Trumpet** (63) (D) R Spicer 5–7–10 J Bramhill —
409 (6) 005-66 **Superbe** (7) (D) J Bridger 5–7–10 A McCarthy (7) 83

Betting: 7–2 Friendly Brave, 9–2 Plain Sailing, 5–1 Half Term, Ivory's Grab Him, Goodbye Paterson, 8–1 The Institute Boy, 12–1 Gold Dot, 14–1 Sound The Trumpet, 16–1 Superbe

FORM GUIDE – Half Term: Outpaced in rear, some headway halfway, soon ridden and beaten, 5th of 9, 13l behind Speedy Classic at Lingfield 7f hcap, AW. The Institute Boy: Never a factor, 8th of 9, 19l behind Apollo Red at Lingfield 5f hcap, AW. Plain Sailing: Led over 3f, hard ridden, led final furlong, headed last strides, 3rd of 6, nk behind Apollodo, with Friendly Brave (one lb) always prominent, ridden over 2f out, one pace 4th, 1¾l, at Lingfield 5f clmh, AW. Ivory's Grab Him: Chased leaders, ridden over 2f out, one pace, 4th of 9, 3l behind Double Dicer at Lingfield 5f clmh, AW. Goodbye Paterson: Led, ridden over 2f out, headed last strides, 2nd of 8, shd behind Friendly Brave (one lb) at Lingfield 5f hcap, AW. Gold Dot: Led briefly, stayed prominent, weakened over 1f out, 5th of 8, 6l behind Tangerine Flyer at Lingfield 5f hcap, AW. Sound The Trumpet: Raced stands' side, no impression from halfway, 12th of 20, 8l behind Margin Park at Newcastle 5f hcap, Gd-Fm.

3.00 SHANKLIN HANDICAP 3YO 1m £3,355 (5 declared)

201 (4) 3451-1 **Blue Shadow** (12) (D) R Hannon 9–7 P Dobbs (7) 85
202 (1) 301- **Diamond Drill** (24) (D) P Makin 9–6 A Clark ●90
203 (5) 50002- **Connectalifting** (19) D French Davis 8–7 S Drowne 82
204 (3) 0004-3 **Prince Oxley** (12) B L Moore 7–11 J Quinn 86
205 (2) 0050-4 **Averham Star** (6) (BF) D Shaw 7–10 A McCarthy (7) 78

Betting: 13–8 Blue Shadow, 7–4 Diamond Drill, 9–2 Prince Oxley, 8–1 Connectalifting, 12–1 Averham Star

FORM GUIDE – Blue Shadow: In touch, chased leader over 1f out, led inside final furlong, ran on, beating Muja's Magic 1¾l at Lingfield 7f hcap, AW. Diamond Drill: Always prominent, led over 2f out, soon clear, easily, beating Red Pepper 8l at Lingfield 7f mdn aucl, AW. Connectalifting: Chased leaders, ridden 2f out, stayed on final furlong, 2nd of 7, 2¾l behind Touchasrose at Wolverhampton 6f clmh, AW. Prince Oxley: Held up, ridden 4f out, kept on one pace final 2f, 3rd of 8, 6l behind Blue Shadow at Lingfield 7f hcap, AW. Averham Star: Close up, outpaced over 2f out, no impression after, 4th of 8, 12l behind Dancing Rio at Southwell 1m hcap, AW.

3.30 COWES MAIDEN STAKES 6f £3,388 (4 declared)

401 (1) 0612-0 **Castle Ashby Jack** (12) P Howling 4–8–7 J Quinn ★ 87
402 (3) 0600-4 **Eagle Fort Lad** (16) J Bridger 5–8–7 F Norton 77
403 (2) 43040- **Mary Cornwallis** (28) R Cowell 4–9–2 Dale Gibson 89
404 (4) 00002- **Vista Alegre** (54) P Makin 3–8–5 S Sanders ●90

Betting: 4–7 Vista Alegre, 2–1 Mary Cornwallis, 9–1 Castle Ashby Jack, 20–1 Eagle Fort Lad

FORM GUIDE – Castle Ashby Jack: Prominent until weakened 2f out, 7th of 13, 10l behind Backtrack at Lingfield 1m2f mdn, AW. Eagle Fort Lad: Soon led, headed 3f out, weakened ends final furlong, 4th of 8, 4l behind Durable George at Lingfield 5f hcap, AW. Mary Cornwallis: Chased leaders, ridden halfway, weakened over 1f out, 10th of 16, 10l behind Alsen at Southwell 5f nov hcap, AW. Vista Alegre: Led, hard ridden 1f out, headed close home, 2nd of 8, head behind Shepard at Lingfield 5f mdn, AW.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
J Weaver	75	330	22.7	+24.38
L Dettori	62	244	25.4	+9.57
A Clark	53	405	13.1	-26.69
S Sanders	46	434	10.6	-132.36
S McGurk	38	225	16	-62.45
D Harrison	34	149	22.8	+21.22
D Morrison	33	231	14.3	-27.57

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
B L Moore	66	433	15.2	-4.49
Mrs P Ivory	23	165	17.6	-52.74
R Hannon	23	141	17.2	-4.08
B Hanson	21	174	13.8	+7.77
S Dow	23	255	92.2	-75.00
W R Muir	22	187	11.8	-63.75
K T Ivory	19	159	8.74	-84.15

Trainer watch

Horses having their first run for a new trainer today — Lingfield: 2.30 The Institute Boy Miss J Cram to K Burke.

Figure Skating

Russians set to keep title

Molly Switek in Milan

THE European Championships begin here today with all eyes on the form of the potential medal winners at next month's Winter Olympics in Japan.

The current ice dance and four times world champions, Russia's Pasha Grishuk and Evgeny Platov, look set to retain their European crown ahead of their perennial Russian rivals Anjelika Krylova and Oleg Ovsyannikov.

The American women Michelle Kwan and Tara Lipinski will probably stand out at Nagano but the strength of the European challenge can be seen here in the defending champion, the 18-year-old Russian Irina Slutskaya, Germany's Tanja Szewczenko, 20, and France's 19-year-old Venessa Gusmeroli.

The men's field at world level is dominated by the Canadian Elvis Stojko and Todd Eldredge of the United States, but among the Europeans France's Philippe Candeloro, the Russian Alexei Yagudin *and Viacheslav Zagorodniuk* from Ukraine are outstanding. Britain's Steven Cousins, 11th last year, landed a triple axel, triple toe loop and a quadruple falchow in practice.

In ice dancing Britain field *the national champions from* Slough, Charlotte Clements, 18, and Gary Shortland, 21; the pairs skaters are Swindon's Marsha Polultiaschenko, 16, and Andrew Seabrook, 19.

Cycling

Sciandri back in the saddle

William Fotheringham

MAX SCIANDRI, Britain's bronze medallist in the men's road race at the Atlanta Olympics, *resumed training on a* stationary exercise bike yesterday after five weeks out of the saddle following a crash on November 30.

A head-on collision with a car while training near his home in Tuscany left Sciandri with two broken vertebrae and serious facial injuries including a broken nose. He spent four weeks in a metal lumbar harness to help his back to heal.

Last weekend he was given the all-clear to ride on an indoor trainer; a decision over whether he can go back on to the open road, and when, is expected later this week.

"The X-rays have shown that the bones are knitting well together," said Sciandri, "but the doctors are still worried about bumps in the road if I go on tarmac. But on my home trainer I'm sweating a bit and working my body."

Sciandri, who has an Italian family but was born in Derby and carries a British passport, is unlikely to play a serious part in the early rounds of the season-long World Cup, which begins on March 21, but hopes to be fresh for the world road championship in October.

KEEPING TRACK
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	COMMENTARY	RESULTS
LINGFIELD	772	782
ALL COURSES COMMENTARY	0891 222 780	
ALL COURSES RESULTS	0891 222 790	

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Football

Chelsea set the pace for Laudrup

Ian Ross and Russell Thomas

BRIAN LAUDRUP, the 28-year-old Denmark forward, may be the next foreign player to join Ruud Gullit's multi-national Chelsea side.

But Chelsea, who have spoken to the Rangers player, may face competition from Manchester United and Ajax, who are also interested in securing a player who becomes a free agent at the end of the season.

Another stumbling block for the London club is that Laudrup wants a six-year contract worth £1 million a year and he may be tempted to join his brother Michael at Ajax. Laudrup came to Rangers for £2.5 million in 1994.

Liverpool's manager Roy Evans wants to shore up his side's defence by signing the Georgia captain Kakhaber Tskhadadze. The experienced centre-back, who plays for the Russian club Alania Vladikavkaz, is expected on Merseyside this week for a brief trial. If he impresses, Evans will try to sign him by meeting the asking price of £1.2 million.

Tskhadadze is a close friend of Manchester City's midfielder Georgi Kinkladze and would have moved to Maine Road last season but for work permit complications. But he is now qualified to move to English football.

If Tskhadadze joins Liverpool, Evans would attempt to offload Neil Ruddock or Phil Babb.

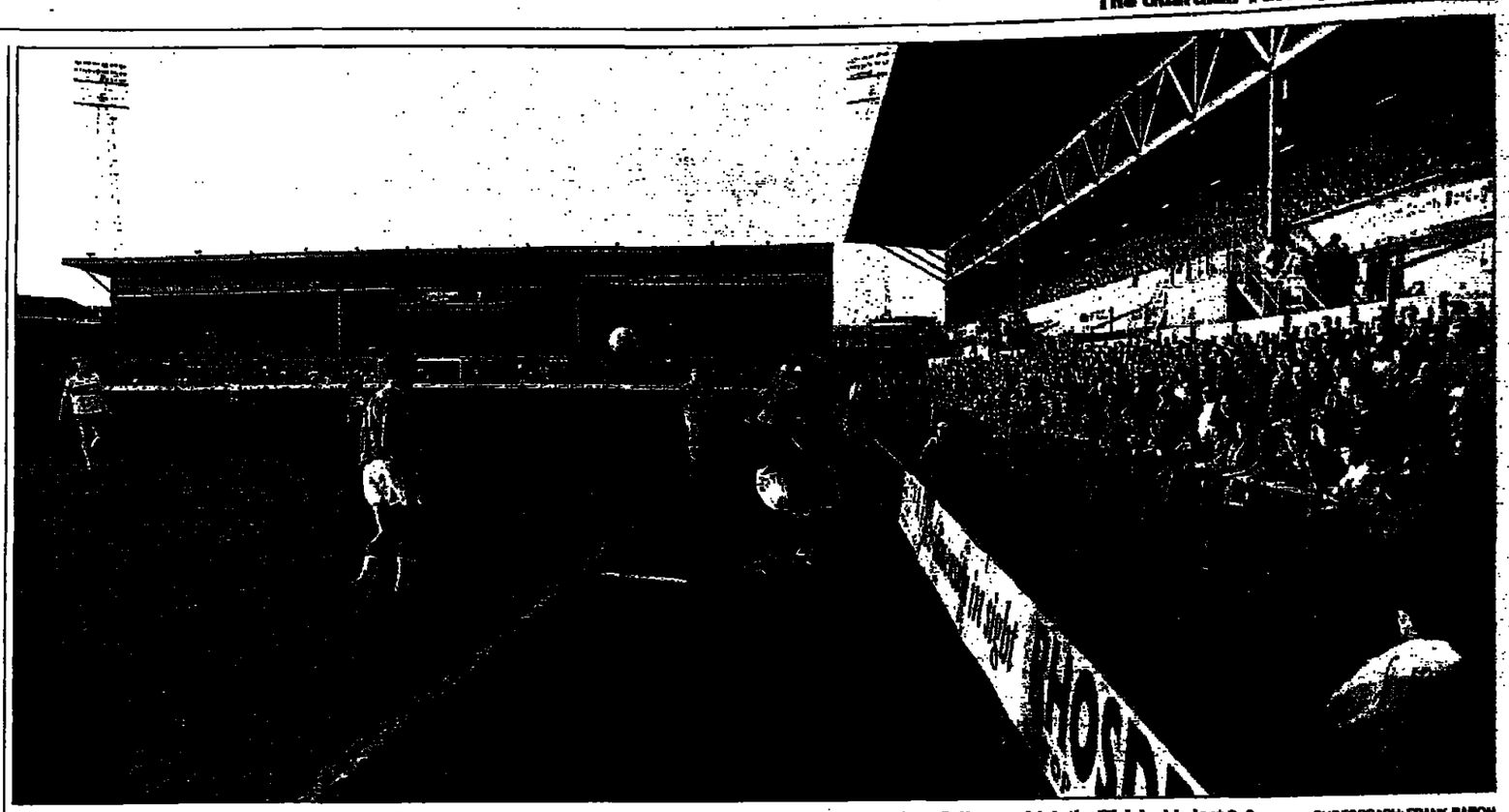
Gary Peters has stepped down as manager of Preston by mutual agreement. His No. 2 David Moyes takes charge until at least the end of the season.

Peters guided Preston to the Third Division championship in 1996 after taking over from John Beck. But they finished only 15th in the Second last season and are currently 17th after losing 3–1 at home to Gillingham on Saturday.

Leicester are taking Emley's winger Dean Calcutt on trial. He will arrive at Filbert Street later this week.

Alf-Inge Haaland, the Leeds midfielder, has not broken a bone in his foot as feared during the 2–1 defeat at Arsenal on Saturday.

An X-ray revealed bad bruising and swelling and the 25-year-old Norway player could still be out for some time. The club's physio David Swift said it was "a nasty injury" and that "we cannot predict how long he will be out."



Your throw, Robin . . . Wrexham's mascot lends a hand during Saturday's home Second Division match against Fulham, which the Welsh side lost 3–0 PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Wimbledon face friendly fire

Stephen Bierley recalls Wrexham's glory years and finds them in a mood to upset the Londoners in tonight's FA Cup replay

"WE WENT to Porto and there was a bloody hurricane. We come to Rome and the bloody shops are shut. When we play in Russia, Reagan will probably have the place blown up."

The Wrexham striker Jim Steel's mini-diatribe in 1984 as his club prepared to meet Roma in the European Cup Winners' Cup is a vivid reminder of how quickly both world politics and football can change.

No more Cold War and no more trips into Europe for the Robins. By so frequently winning the Welsh Cup, this tiny North Wales club regularly sent shock waves across to the Continent, none greater than in 1976 when an Anderlecht side containing the mighty World Cup Dutchmen Rensenbrink and Haan were pushed to the limits in the quarter-finals of the Cup Winners' Cup.

Wrexham lost 2–1 on aggregate and the Belgian club went on to win the trophy. What days those were under John Neal, a manager who mitigated his immense intake of nicotine by sipping after-match milk.

Arfon Griffiths was the midfield star and later took over from Neal. Under him Wrexham knocked Newcastle United out of the FA Cup in 1978, eventually losing to Arsenal in the quarter-finals.

Manchester-based journalists actually visited the Racecourse Ground on their days off just to watch Wrexham and to be part of the family. My former colleague Paul Fitzpatrick remembers those heady times with affection.

"One night I was the last out of the press box and when I went downstairs there were no glasses left to have a drink," he recalls. "Arfon spotted my dilemma and went off to find a tap and wash out a glass for me."

The friendliness survives, as does Wrexham's amazing ability to rise head and shoulders above themselves when faced with cup opposition from the league's upper echelons.

In 1992 they defeated the champions Arsenal in the FA Cup and last year, on the way to the quarter-finals for the third time in their history, they put paid to West Ham. Eventually losing to Chesterfield still rankles; the biter bit.

As long as the League of Wales survives Wrexham's road to Europe is forever cut off, for they are no longer allowed into the Welsh Cup. So they must make do with the English and their silver pots.

This season's FA Cup trail appeared to have gone stone cold two minutes into injury-time of their third-round match against Wimbledon at Selhurst Park. A Neil Ardley corner was headed in by Marcus Gayle and thousands of Wrexham fans fell miserably silent.

Seconds later they were in full and jubilant voice again when it became clear that the referee Steve Dunn had blown his final whistle before the ball went into the net. Saint Dunn they call him in Clwyd.



Flynn . . . long-serving

Joe Kinnear, the Dons manager, bellyached hugely at the injustice of it all, and no doubt his team will be well and truly up for it tonight in the replay.

Wimbledon, the Cup winners in 1988, have built their formidable recent history on injustices, real and imaginary, and Wrexham's own confidence was hardly enhanced by a 3–0 home defeat against Fulham last Saturday and failure in the second round of the Auto Windscreens Shield against Mansfield Town the same week.

"In fact our match against Wimbledon is a good one to have after two defeats," said Kevin Reeves, the club's assistant manager, for whom Malcolm Allison paid Norwich City £1.2 million to take to Manchester City in 1980 — a massive fee in those days.

"This game looks after itself," he said. "There will be a cracking atmosphere and I have no doubt our players will respond as they normally do in such situations."

Reeves's boss Brian Flynn became manager in 1989 and is now the fourth longest serving in the league behind Alex Ferguson at Old Trafford, Dario Gradi of Crewe and Port Vale's John Rudge.

Of late the murmurings of discontent have been growing and the team were booed off the pitch after a goalless home draw against Gillingham just before Christmas. But a win tonight would quickly silence the malcontents.

"Of course we are aware how fired up Wimbledon will be, but they will have it in the back of their minds how we have turned over more than a few fancied clubs here," said Flynn.

Vinnie Jones may have persuaded Bobby Gould and the Welsh FA that Wales was the land of his fathers, but tonight several thousand Welshman will be only too delighted to send him back to England with a totally unsentimental parting gesture.

Hamilton turns down Republic of Ireland post

BRYAN HAMILTON, dismissed as Northern Ireland manager in October, yesterday turned down the post of technical director with the Republic of Ireland. Hamilton, now first-team coach at Ipswich, said he was flattered to be approached but preferred the day-to-day involvement with a league club.

"It is a special job and one that I would have loved doing, but it would have taken me away from home and the English game," Hamilton said.

"The FAI will now concentrate on identifying a suitable candidate to fill this very important role as soon as possible," said its president Pat Quigley.

Colombia have arranged a friendly with Northern Ireland as part of their World Cup preparations. The South Americans, Group B opponents for England in June, will play in Belfast on March 25.

Aston Villa's Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich was yesterday named Oceania Footballer of the Year for 1997. Bosnich, 26 today and the first goalkeeper to win, polled nearly twice as many votes as the joint runners-up Stan Lazaridis, West Ham's Australian winger, and Christian Karembeu from New Caledonia.

Southampton's Australian forward Robbie Slater, twice a previous winner, was fourth and narrowly beaten by New Zealand striker Wynton Rufer for the Oceania Player of the Decade award.

Stevenage Borough, the Vauxhall Conference club who so stoutly refused to switch their FA fourth-round home tie to St James' Park, could play a cup-tie on Tyneside after all.

Yesterday they were drawn against Newcastle United's non-league neighbours Gateshead in the second round of the FA Umbro Trophy. Provided they beat Chesham United in Wednesday's first-round replay, they will head north-east to Gateshead on January 31, six days after hosting Newcastle at their Broadhall Way ground.

The irony of the situation was not lost on Gateshead chairman John Gibson. "It's an incredible twist of fate after all that wrangling," he said.

The former Northampton manager Dave Smith has died at his home in Derby. He was 82. Smith, originally from Newcastle, was Northampton secretary for three years from 1951 and manager until 1958, steering the club to a famous 3–1 third-round FA Cup win over Arsenal.

Scottish Premier Division: St Johnstone 2, Hearts 3

Hopeful Hearts narrow gap on Rangers

Patrick Glenn

HEARTS had to dig for victory on a night when physical endeavour counted for more than skill. Having gone 2–0 up in the first half, Hearts saw their lead neutralised before Jim Hamilton scored his second goal to take his team to within a point of Rangers.

Kenny Dalglish and Walter Smith were the most prominent of the managers at McDiarmid Park, probably to have another look at Callum Davidson, the young St Johnstone full-back who has shown so much promise.

It was Davidson's misfortune to be in the middle of an unexpectedly difficult period towards the interval. The early skirmishing, in which the Hearts defence looked vulnerable, had suggested that such a scoreline would be in favour of the home side.

Hearts, in fairness, had been hit by suspensions and injuries that saw Dave McPherson, Gary Naysmith and Stephen Frail recalled to the team. McPherson, making his first start this season after six months out with a damaged knee, looked rusty.

After Naysmith headed Nick Dasovic's header off the line, Hearts showed they carried much more menace when going forward.

Jim Hamilton was first to make a telling impact, after 28 minutes. David Weir delivered a low centre from the right and Hamilton connected at the far side of the six-yard box, driving in with his left foot.

Naysmith justified his recall in one glorious moment. Stephane Adam's cross from the right was headed out by John McQuillan, Colin Cameron hooked the ball back and Naysmith met it on the corner of the area, volleying left-footed past Alan Main.

But Hearts fell into a mood of self-congratulation at the start of the second half and allowed Davidson to score a goal that was enough to make the visits by Dalglish and Smith worthwhile.

The full-back carried the ball 30 yards before playing a one-two with George O'Boyle, striding into the area and slipping the ball past Gilles Rousset. It was a moment that proved that the full-back has composure and confidence.

But the home side's insistent surges brought the equaliser after 62 minutes. Preston released Tommy Wright on the left side of the area. McPherson's left leg tripped him and O'Boyle converted the penalty.

St Johnstone (4–4–2): Main; McQuillan, Weir, Kernaghan, Davidson; Scott, Kane, Dasovic, Wright; O'Boyle, Preston. Hearts (3–5–2): Rousset; Ritchie, Weir, McPherson; Frail (Flogel, 64min), Cameron, Fulton, McCann, Naysmith; Adam, Hamilton.
Referee: M McCurry (Glasgow).
ends

Ronaldo top of world poll again

RONALDO, Internazionale's striker, is Fifa's World Player of the Year for the second year running, the first player to win this award twice since its inception in 1991.

He comfortably beat another Brazilian, Roberto Carlos of Real Madrid, Arsenal's Dutch striker Dennis Bergkamp and Juventus' French midfielder Zinedine Zidane in a poll of 121 national coaches.

Brazil won the team title. "It is brilliant that Brazil won best player and best team," said Ronaldo, 21. "I am only sorry I couldn't share it with Carlos."

Pools Forecast

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

1	Barnsley	v C Palace	1
2	Blackburn	v A Villa	1
3	Coventry	v Arsenal	x
4	Leeds	v Sheff Wed	x
5	Leicester	v Liverpool	2
6	Newcastle	v Bolton	1
7	Tottenham	v West Ham	1
8	Wimbledon	v Derby	2

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION

9	Birmingham	v Huddersfield	1
10	Bradford C	v Sunderland	x
11	Middlesbro	v Ipswich	1
12	Norwich	v Nottm Forest	x
13	Oxford	v Charlton	2
14	Port Vale	v Portsmouth	1
15	QPR	v Tranmere	1
16	Sheff Utd	v Wolves	x
17	Swindon	v Reading	1
18	West Brom	v Crewe	1

SECOND DIVISION

19	Blackpool	v Bournemouth	1
20	Bristol Rvrs	v Burnley	1
21	Chesterfield	v Plymouth	1
22	Fulham	v Wycombe	1
23	Gillingham	v York	x
24	Grimsby	v Brentford	1
25	Millwall	v Wrexham	x
26	Northampton	v Carlisle	1
27	Oldham	v Luton	1
28	Southend	v Walsall	x
29	Watford	v Preston	1
30	Wigan	v Bristol C	2

THIRD DIVISION

31	Chester	v Barnet	1
32	Exeter	v Doncaster	1
33	L Orient	v Brighton	1
34	Macclesfield	v Hartlepool	x
35	Mansfield	v Scunthorpe	1
36	Notts Co	v Cardiff	1
37	Peterborough	v Rochdale	1
38	Rotherham	v Darlington	1
39	Scarborough	v Lincoln	2

BELL'S SCOTTISH PREMIER DIVISION

40	Aberdeen	v Dunfermline	1
41	Dundee Utd	v Celtic	2
42	Hibernian	v St Johnstone	x
43	Kilmarnock	v Hearts	2
44	Rangers	v Motherwell	1

SCOTTISH FIRST DIVISION

45	Airdrie	v Ayr Utd	1
46	Morton	v Dundee	2
47	Hamilton	v Stirling A	x
48	Raith Rvrs	v Falkirk	1
49	St Mirren	v Partick	1

Team talk
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Arsenal	60	Everton	73	QPR	86
Aston Villa	61	Hudd. Town	74	Rangers	87
Barnsley	62	Ipswich Town	75	Sheffield United	88
Birm. City	63	Leeds United	76	Sheffield Wed.	89
Blackburn	64	Leicester City	77	Southampton	90
Bolton	65	Liverpool	78	Spurs	91
Brentford	66	Man. City	79	Stoke City	92
Burnley	67	Man. United	80	Sunderland	93
Celtic	68	Middlesbrough	81	West Ham	94
Chelsea	69	Millwall	82	Wimbledon	95
Coventry City	70	Newcastle Utd	83	Wolves	96
Crystal Palace	71	Norwich City	84		
Derby County	72	Nottm. Forest	85		

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Results

Football

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP
Second round
Clydebank (3) 6 Montrose (0) 0 263
Brown 5, Murdoch 24 (pen) McWilliams 38, Ward 58 (pen) Nicolls 70, Lovering 74 (Clydebank away to Hearts)

Second-round replay
Queen of South (3) 4 Arbroath (0) 0
Eadie 7, Bryce 22 2,167
Mallan 38, Townsley 74 (pen) (Queen of South home to Stirling Albion)

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE
Premier Division
St Johnstone (0) 2 Hearts (2) 3
Davidson 48 Hamilton 29, 70
O'Boyle 83 (pen) Naysmith 36
5,404

UNIBOND LEAGUE: President's Cup First round: Postponed: Emley v Stocksbridge.
PONTINS LEAGUE CUP: Group Four: Chesterfield 1, Stoke 0. Group Five: Newcastle 0, York 1.
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Chelsea 2, Southampton 0.
FAI CUP: First-round replay: St Patricks Ath 3, Waterford Utd 0.
FA TROPHY: Second-round draw: Altrincham or Runcorn v Morecambe; Bath C or Hastings Tn v Grantham Tn or Leigh RMI; Barrow or Worksop v St Albans C or Stringbourne; Hednesford v Gresley Rvrs or Leek Tns; Yeovil Tn or Yeading v Southport; Hayes v Kidderminster Harriers; Halifax v Welling Utd or Slough Tn; Gloucester C v Burton Alb; Bishop Auckland v Boreham Wood; Hereford Utd v Dover Ath; Margate v Basildon; Dagenham & Redbridge v Hyde Utd; Enfield or Cheltenham Tn v Rushden & Diamonds; Guiseley or Telford Utd v Ashton Utd or Chorley; Nortwich Victoria v Kettering Tn; Gateshead v Stevenage Bor or Chesham Utd. Ties to be played Sat, Jan 31.

Golf

MERCEDES CHAMPIONSHIPS (Carlsbad, Calif): Leading final scores (US unless stated): 271 P Mickelson 69, 67, 66, 69. 272 M O'Meara 71, 70, 67, 64; T Woods 72, 67, 66, 64. 275 N Price (Zim) 66, 70, 69, 70; J Cook 65, 70, 70, 70. 277 M Calcavecchia 70, 74, 66, 67, S Cink 71, 67, 71, 68; G Hjertstedt (Swe) 69, 68, 69, 71, D Duval 68, 70, 68, 71. 278 E Els (SA) 67, 71, 71, 69; F Nobilo (NZ) 67, 69, 70, 72. 279 S McCarron 70, 71, 70, 68. 280 V Singh (Fij) 75, 72, 67, 66; S Jones 69, 71, 72, 68; P Stankowski 69, 72, 69, 70; L Roberts 70, 72, 68, 70; D Love 70, 72, 67, 71. 282 D Frost (SA) 74, 72, 68, 68. 284 J Sluman 70, 75, 71, 68; S Ebbing-ton (Aus) 72, 73, 71, 68; S Hoch 70, 70, 69, 73. 285 D Toms 73, 75, 70, 67; N Faldo (GB) 71, 75, 70, 69; B Faxon 72, 72, 70, 71.

Tennis

SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT: First round: Mens: F Clavet (Sp) bt T Johansson (Swe) 6–3, 7–6.
Womens: A Kournikova (Rus) bt Y Basuki (Indo) 6–4, 3–6 ret; M Zwerewa (Bela) bt R McQuillan (Aus) 6–2, 7–6; C Martinez (Sp) bt G Leon-Garcia (Sp) 6–2, 6–2; S Testard (Fr) bt K Guse (Aus) 6–1, 6–2

Basketball

NBA: Washington 102, Atlanta 107 (ot); Detroit 113, LA Clippers 85; New York 92, Seattle 91; Vancouver 90, Miami 96; LA Lakers 83, Charlotte 88. Leading standings: Eastern Conference: Atlantic: 1, Miami (W23, L11, Pct.676, GB0); 2, New York (20-15-.571-3); 3, New Jersey (18-16-.529-5). Central: 1, Chicago (W25, L11, Pct.694, GB0); 2, Indiana (23-11-.676-1); 3, Atlanta (22-12-.647-2). Western Conference: Midwest: 1, Utah (W23, L11, Pct.676, GB0); 2, San Antonio (23-12-.657-½); 3, Houston (17-16-.531-5). Pacific: 1, Seattle (W28, L7, Pct.800, GB0); 2, LA Lakers (27-8-.750-2); 3, Phoenix (22-10-.688-6).

Cricket

U-19 WORLD CUP: Preliminary rounds: Group One: Sweden: Scotland 202 (50 overs: Watts 46; Abeiro 3–42). Kenya 208–2 (35.5 overs; Janmohammed 82, T Odoyo 98no). Kenya won by eight wickets. Group Two: Pretoria: New Zealand 180 (47.1 overs: Schofield 32–2, Logan 42–3). England 181 (43.2 overs; Martin 2–25, Mills 2–33). England won by four wickets. Johannesburg: Namibia 105 (43 overs; Swanepoel 28no). Bangladesh 109–6 (28.1 overs). Bangladesh won by four wickets. Group Three: Benoni: Sri Lanka 168 (45 overs; Hewage 80no; Ahmed 3–32). Pakistan 169–3 (45.5 overs; Razza 90no, Bazid Khan 41no): Pakistan won by seven wickets. Johannesburg: Denmark 191–9 (48.3 overs; Christiansen 36; McGarrigle 5–25). Ireland 160 (44 overs; Dunlop 57). Denmark won by two wickets. Group Four: Potchefstroom: Australia: 352–6 (50 overs; Thorley 195, North 115). Zimbabwe 249 (41.4 overs; Vermeulen 69, Barrett 41). Australia won by 103 runs.
ONE-DAY MATCH (Melbourne): New Zealand 242 (49.4 overs; S Fleming 58; Kasprowicz 4–61, Martyn 2–33). Australia A 221 (49.1 overs; J Langer 78, O'Connor 4–36, Harris 3–33). NZ won by 21 runs.
INDEPENDENCE CUP (Dhaka): Bangladesh 134 (38.3 overs; Sanjah 3–33, Mushtaq 2–20, Afridi 2–25, Aaqib 2–27). Pakistan 136–1 (23.2 overs; Saeed Anwar, 73no). Pakistan won by nine wickets.

Ice Hockey

SUPERLEAGUE: Standings: 1, Ayr (GP19, GF78, GA55, Pts27); 2, Manchester (20-88-60-24); 3, Cardiff (17-94-61-23); 4, Nottingham (19-70-60-23); 5, Sheffield (19-71-65-23); 6, Bracknell (19-58-71-16); 7, Basingstoke (17-64-72-13); 8, Newcastle (20-47-87-10).
NHL: Detroit 2, Washington 0; Anaheim 2, Dallas 1 (ot); Tampa Bay 2, Philadelphia 5; Phoenix 4, Ottawa 4 (ot). Leading standings: Eastern Conference: Northeast: 1, Montreal (W24, L16, T8, GP138, GA109, Pts54); 2, Pittsburgh (23-14-8-125-104-54); 3, Boston (20-16-8-111-106-48). Atlantic: 1, New Jersey (W28, L14, T2, GP132, GA92, Pts58); 2, Philadelphia (25-11-8-134-97-58); 3, Washington (21-17-5-125-122-50). Western Conference: Central: 1, Dallas (W26, L11, T8, GP144, GA97, Pts54); 2, Detroit (27-11-9-153-110-63); 3, St Louis (25-15-6-141-115-56). Pacific: 1, Colorado (W22, L9, T15, GP128, GA113, Pts59); 2, Los Angeles (17-19-5-122-125-42); 3, Anaheim (15-23-6-107-137-36).

Motor Sport

PARIS-DAKAR RALLY: Stage 11 (Geo to Tombouctou: 411km): Cars: 1, B Saby (Fr) Mitsubishi 3hr 37min 52sec; 2, J-P Fontenay (Fr) Mitsubishi at 1min 17sec; 3, J-L Schlesser (Fr) Buggy 11.53. Overall: 1, Fontenay 33hr 4min 54sec; 2, Saby at 9min 25sec; 3, K Shinozuka (Japan) Mitsubishi 1.58.39; 4, H Masuoka (Japan) 2.04.11; 5, Schlesser 3.50.07; 6, P Alliot (Fr) 5.48.36. Motorcycles: 1, C Sotelo (Sp) Cagiva 9hr 50min 39sec. Overall: 1, S Peterhansel (Fr) Yamaha 31hr 37min 58sec; 2, R Sainct (Fr) KTM 20.05; 3, F Meoni (It) KTM 25.10.

Real Tennis

BRITISH PROFESSIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP (Queen's): Semi-finals: J Male/R Gunn bt N Wood/A Phillips 6–2, 6–1, 6–5; C Begg/M Gooding bt K Sheldon/A Lyons 6–3, 6–3, 6–2.

Alpine Skiing

BRITISH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (Tignes, Fr): Men: International Giant Slalom: 1, I Kostelic (Croatia) 2min 13.29sec; 2, A Baxter (Aviemore) 2.13.34; 3, J Moulder-Brown (London) 2.14.46. British National Giant Slalom: 1, Baxter; 2, Moulder-Brown; 3, G Traynor (Fife).
Women: International Giant Slalom: 1, S Ormond (Grand Bornand) 2.18.51; 2, K Meilleur (Fr) 2.18.33-3, T Pirie (Aberdeen) 2.19.73. British National Giant Slalom: 1, Ormond; 2, Pirie; 3, C Alcott (Twickenham).

Squash

OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS (Rye, NY): Semi-finals: Men: S Cavaliaga (Bel) bt A Fahy (Egypt) 12–15, 15–8, 9–15, 15–12, 15–7; P Johnson (Eng) bt D Forslund (Swe) 11–15, 15–8, 15–12, 15–11.
Women: C Jackson (Eng) bt L Charman (Eng) 9–10, 4–8, 9–0, 9–2, 9–0; S Wright (Eng) bt J Trenfield (Eng) 9–0, 9–3, 9–7.

Swimming

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (Perth): Finals: Mens: 200m freestyle: 1, M Klim (Aus) 1min 47.41sec; 2, M Rosolino (It) 1.48.30; 3, P Van den Hoogenband (Neth) 1.48.66; 7, P Palmer (GB) 1.50.43. 100m breaststroke: 1, F Deburghgraeve (Bel) 1min 01.34sec; 2, Z Qiliang (China) 1.01.76; 3, K Gross (US) 1.01.93.
Diving: 3m synchronised springboard: 1, Xu Hao, Yu Zhuocheng (China) 313.50pts; 2, A Mesch, H Schlepps (Ger) 308.28; 3, S Roy, D Puller (Aus) 305.16; 4, T Ali, M Shipman (GB) 285.35.
Women: 100m freestyle: 1, J Thompson (US) 54.95; 2, M Moracova (Slovak) 55.09; 3, S Ying (China) 55.10; 6, S Ralph (GB) 56.03. 400m individual medley: 1, C Yan (China) 4.36.66; 2, Y Klochkova (Ukr) 4.38.80; 3, Y Tajima (Japan) 4.39.46.
Diving: Platforms: 1, O Zhupyna (Ukr) 550.41; 2, Cai Yuyan (China) 526.26; 3, Chen Li (China) 519.45.
Water polo: Group A: Australia 13, Brazil 5; US 14, NZ 4; Canada 6, Russia 5. Group B: Italy 19, Kazakhstan 3; Netherlands 9, Spain 1; Hungary 9, Greece 8.

Fixtures

(7.30 unless stated)

Football

FA CUP: Third round: Bournemouth v Huddersfield (7.45); Cheltenham v Reading (7.45); Hereford v Tranmere (7.45); Peterborough v Walsall (7.45); West Brom v Wigan v Rotherham (7.45); Scunthorpe Fulham v Wycombe (7.45); Luton v Brentford (7.45); Northampton v Torquay (7.45).
SCOTTISH LEAGUE: First: Hamilton v Ayr. Second: Clyde v Stranraer.
FA TROPHY: First round: Altrincham v Runcorn. First-round replays: Worksop v Barrow (7.45); Leigh RMI v Grantham (7.45); Telford v Gateley (7.45); Leek Tn v Gresley Rvrs (7.45); Chorley v Ashton Utd; Slough v Welling (7.45); Hastings v Bath C; Chesham v Stevenage (7.45); Yeading v Yeovil.
SPALDING CHALLENGE CUP: Quarter-final replays: Morecambe v Gateshead (7.45).
UNIBOND LEAGUE: First round: Bamber Bridge v Runcorn. First-round replays: Workington v Barrow (7.45); Leigh RMI v Grantham (7.45); Telford v Gateley (7.45); Leek Tn v Gresley Rvrs (7.45); Chorley v Ashton Utd; Slough v Welling (7.45); Hastings v Bath C; Chesham v Stevenage (7.45); Yeading v Yeovil.
SPALDING CHALLENGE CUP: Quarter-final replays: Morecambe v Gateshead (7.45).
UNIBOND LEAGUE: First Division: Abingdon Tn v Bognor Regis Tn. Associate Members Trophy: Third round: Aveley v East Thurrock Utd; Barking v Bedford Tn; Corinthian-Casuals v Southall; Edgware Tn v Wealdstone; Epsom & Ewell v Windsor & Eton; Marlow v Horsham.
DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Midland Division: Hinckley Utd v Evesham Utd. Cup: Second round: Clevedon v Forest Green.
NPI: COUNTIES LEAGUE: First Division: Nantwich Tn v Kidsgrove Ath.
NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier: Thackley v Denaby Utd.
SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Elmore v Bridport.
PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Preston v Tranmere (7.0). League Cup: Group Three: Notts Co v Derby (7.0).
AVON INSURANCE COMB: First: C Palace v Charlton (2.0); Millwall v Norwich (2.0); Oxford Utd v Luton (12.0).
HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Fort William v Clachnacuddin (8.0).
GILBERT LEAGUE CUP: Quarter-final, first leg: Bangor v Conwy; Barry Tn v Inter Cable-Tel.
IRISH LEAGUE: First Division: Limavady Utd v Carrick.
COUNTY ANTRIM SHIELD: Semi-final: Dundela v Crusaders.

Rugby Union

TETLEY'S BITTER CUP: Fourth round: Moseley v Bath; Worcester v Bristol.
WELSH CHALLENGE TROPHY: Pool A: Llanelli v Namibia (7.15). Bb Neath v Spain (7.15); Newport v Rugby Canada (7.0).
TENNENTS PREMIERSHIP: First Division: Boroughmuir v Heriots FP (7.0).

Basketball

UNI-BALL TROPHY: Quarter-finals, first leg: Newcastle v Birmingham; Sheffield v Leicester.

Ice Hockey

EXPRESS CUP: Nottingham v Manchester.

Sport in brief

Skiing

Sophie Ormond, 18, secured her second overall British title yesterday with victory in the giant slalom at the British Land National Championships in Tignes, *writes Pete Nichols*. Ormond beat all her domestic opposition and overseas competitors as well to become the first Briton at the championships to win a race overall.

Whatever happens in today's final discipline, the slalom, Ormond, who won the British downhill and Super-G titles at the weekend, is guaranteed her first overall crown since 1995.

But Emma Carrick-Anderson's depressing rim continued. The 22-year-old Scot, the oldest skier in the race, crashed out at the sixth gate on the first run. This winter she has lost seven races to the weather and has failed to finish in four of the five that have taken place.

Drugs in sport

The Russian speed skater Svetlana Fedotkina has been banned for life for refusing an out-of-competition dope test in Canada, her own federation said yesterday. "I can confirm the ban," said its president Vladimir Komarov, but he declined to elaborate.

Snooker

Rex Williams, chairman of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, yesterday urged a players' meeting in Blackpool to support his plan to extend full voting rights from the top 40 players in the world rankings for the past two years to the top 64, *writes Clive Everton*. He admitted that this was intended to dilute the influence of his chief critic Ian Doyle, who manages 15 top-40 players.

Squash

England's Cassie Jackman and Sue Wright came through the semi-finals in the Open Championships in Rye, New York, against lower-ranked English opposition yesterday. The top-seeded Jackman, from Norfolk, fought back from two games down to beat Linda Charman of Sussex 9–10, 4–9, 9–0, 9–2, 9–0 and *Wright, the No. 2* seed from Kent, beat Yorkshire's Jenny Tranfield in straight games.

Olympic Games

Kellogg's has announced a three-year sponsorship deal worth around £1 million which will benefit Britain's winter team in Nagano next month and the summer squad in Sydney in 2000. The short-track speed skaters Nicky Gooch and Matt Jasper are among the first to benefit.

The captain of Britain's all-Scottish curling team, Dougie Dryburgh, also welcomed the deal. "Sweden and Canada are the favourites but after that Britain, Switzerland and Norway all have a good medal chances," he said.

Motor Sport

The Formula One team Jordan yesterday announced a one-year deal with Pearl Assurance.

Hockey

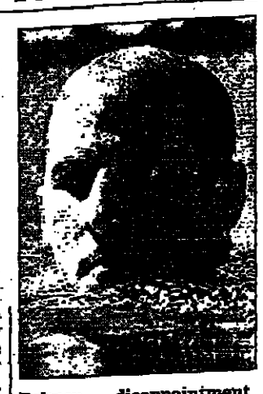
Teddington and Reading, surprise qualifiers in the Indoor Club Championship, have been drawn in the same pool for finals night at Crystal Palace on February 6, *writes Peter Colvill*.

Pool A: Teddington, Reading, Doncaster. Pool B: East Grinstead, Hull, Old Loughtonians.

Swimming

An elite coach plus an injection of National Lottery money could transform the sport — given world championship medals. **David Hopps** reports

Perth strings tied to British success



Palmer . . . disappointment

BRITAIN's swimmers are ranked as high as seventh in the world, which matches the rarefied status of the England football team. But while England's improvements on the football pitch have advanced them as potential World Cup winners, the prospects of the country's swimmers in the world championships in Perth have failed to stir similar sentiments.

Seventh was Paul Palmer's lot yesterday in the final of the 200 metres freestyle, an event in which he is European champion. It was the first disappointment for a British squad who are daring to anticipate a brighter future.

A good showing in Perth is crucial for British swimming as it awaits the response to an application for National Lottery funding of £4 million annually over the next seven years. Ominously, sport's share of the lottery cake since Labour's election victory has gradually diminished.

This year's interim award of £2 million has already vastly improved the lot of our leading swimmers. Palmer, and his coach Ian Turner, led a stream of 17 of our top swimmers to Bath, which is already the most impressive national swimming centre ever provided in Britain.

It was Palmer who roused us from national Olympic depression two years ago by taking silver in the 400m freestyle in Atlanta. Even at the height of his excitement, he voiced his dismay at a precarious future. Short of money, and still living with his parents, Palmer railed about life as a "second-class citizen".

He now competes on a more level playing field, give or take a few vials of Chinese growth hormone. But to push home the advantages of further lottery investment, he knows a 400m medal is essential.

Deryk Snelling, the national performance director, recognises the impatience for a payback. "We have already made improvements far beyond our expectations," he said, "but people want instant results. The real test will not come until the Sydney Olympics, but unless we are on the podium in Perth there will always be some who question the extra expenditure."

It is difficult to see where those successes might arise. Palmer will be smarting for revenge in the 400m free, but will need to rebuild his self-belief after a swim yesterday that he dismissed as "awful"; James Hickman, the 200m butterfly world short-course champion, may do well now he is healthy again; and a men's freestyle relay medal would reflect the camaraderie Bath has engendered.

Snelling is aware of the challenge. "Once you enter the world's top six, you think, 'wow'. America are gigantic — they have university clubs with the same resources as we do — China are cheating and Australia are so desperate to do well that they are pouring money in," he said. "Swimming matters to them. When Kieren Perkins wins gold for Australia, every bar in town is dry."

More than 30 years have passed since Snelling, disillusioned with Britain's disposition towards adequacy, left his coaching post at Southampton, firstly for California, then to Canada, where he coached Vancouver to the national championships for 29 successive years.

He now talks of giving Britain "a four-year donation of my time" before returning to Canada to retire. And do not let him suspect you dismiss this gesture lightly. In Snelling's list of what it takes to win medals, the coach comes first and the facilities second. The athlete trails in third.

"British swimming was going nowhere in the Sixties," he said. "If we occasionally did well, it was by accident. Swimming clubs were packed with enthusiastic kids splashing up and down in public time. There was no concept of weights or circuit training; America was a different world. For the likes of Duncan Goodhew, Adrian Moorhouse or David Wilkie to succeed in such a mess was phenomenal."

Snelling wants the lottery to fund a world-class national centre in Bath, with medical and physiotherapy back-up and live-in accommodation for 50 leading swimmers; below that, he envisages half-a-dozen regional centres and in total some 20 50-metre pools.

"Our swimming could be changed overnight if we could guarantee our top athletes quality training time between 6–8am and 3–5pm. Then they could stay in school, have proper mealtimes, do their homework at sensible hours, and go to bed at a reasonable hour — the respect their commitment deserves. No sickness, no fractured lifestyles.

"Create excellence and excellence spreads. For 40 years we have been trying to widen the base to create excellence. That doesn't work. We are as good as anyone in the world at participation, but that is only half the story.

"The lottery can underpin our ambitions. Bath is already the biggest swimming club in the world. It offers British swimming the prospect of the biggest leap forward this century."

Isolation has always been a problem for our top swimmers. They follow demanding training schedules, passing hour upon hour in the pool every day, with meagre financial reward. The dissimilarity of their lifestyle to that of their friends can soon undermine their ambition.

Snelling remains adamant that Bath will reap dividends. "Our top swimmers can share common goals and lifestyles. It is clear to them why they are there. They are trying to be a big fish in a big pond, and it is working, you'll see. Just give us time."

Rugby Union

Bath front row cited for ear-biting

The guilty man is refusing to step forward, reports **Robert Kitson**

LONDON SCOTTISH finally lost patience with Bath's slow-turning wheels of justice yesterday as they cited the Heineken Cup finalists' entire front row and released a gruesome picture of the bite inflicted on their flanker Simon Fenn during Saturday's Tetley's Bitter Cup tie at the Recreation Ground.

As Bath continued to conduct their own inquiry into the incident, Fenn described the unprovoked attack on him by a Bath forward as "barbaric" and expressed surprise the guilty man had not stepped forward. His club have forwarded video and pictorial evidence to both their opponents and the Rugby Football Union who, they feel, should contemplate stiff sanctions.

"One or two people are suggesting Bath should be taken out of the competition, although if that were to occur it would be an RFU decision," stressed the Scottish chief executive Richard Yerbury, ironically also a club member of Bath.

He has already called for the player responsible to be banned for at least 12 months and indicated the Exiles would seek compensation for both themselves and their flanker.

Fenn, a 26-year-old Australian who joined the club from Manly in Sydney shortly before Christmas, was bitten when a scrum collapsed late in the first half of the tie which Bath won 24–23. Still heavily bandaged, he last night finally gave his own version of the events which led to him requiring more than 25 stitches.

"I was on the blind side of the scrum which seemed to collapse a little and I fell into what was previously the tunnel," he said. "I immediately felt a bite and a tearing of the skin. It's barbaric. You can train to avoid injury but when you're on the ground with people on top of you, you can't protect yourself.

"I've got a pretty good idea who did it. I couldn't imagine being in his shoes but for the sake of his club, his club's sponsors, the supporters and rugby in general he ought to carry the responsibility. I am surprised he hasn't come forward. I hoped it would be sorted out by now."

Yerbury admits he is "disappointed" the West Country club have not yet acted, and knows the citing of the all-international Bath front row of Kevin Yates, Federico Mendez and Victor Ubogu is only a step towards resolving the matter.

The RFU has confirmed Scottish's citing of the front row within the seven-day limit and that Bath must respond by Friday. In a statement, Twickenham reminded everyone that the "onus is on London Scottish to prove to the disciplinary panel which player was responsible".

Footage of the game is understood to have been taken from four camera angles, although not from the temporary stand side of the Rec where the incident took place. "We've sent Bath a copy of the video we make for training purposes and a video of the injury itself, plus stills from that," revealed Yerbury, whose priority nevertheless remains Fenn's well-being.

It took the player 24 hours before he could face looking at the gaping hole where his lobe used to be and he will be out of the game for at least a month. Fenn may need a graft to repair the ear.

Bath would only confirm their own inquiry is continuing, including the quizzing of players, and are still trying to gather all available video footage. "We feel it would be dreadfully irresponsible for us to enter into any public speculation as to the nature of the incident before we have been able to examine all the available evidence. The evidence we have so far is inconclusive," said Bath's chief executive Tony Swift.



Fenn . . . 'I felt a bite and tearing skin. It's barbaric'



Stain on the game. . . Scottish's Simon Fenn and the ear that needed more than 25 stitches ADAM BUTLER

Luton Town open door for ground-share with Warren's Bedford

FRANK WARREN, the Bedford chairman, yesterday paved the way for a ground-share with Luton Town FC when he said that he expects the Premiership Two leaders to leave their Goldington Road home at end of the season.

Luton's chairman David Kohler later confirmed that he had been approached by a Bedford representative. Kohler said: "I said to them if it is in Luton Town's interests and not detrimental to the playing surface, it is something I would consider. I will be happy to talk."

Warren said that even promotion would not increase gates enough for his club to make a profit. "Bedford could even move out of Bedford the way things are going. We are losing £1.8 million a year and if we invest more in the ground it is only going to increase the loss," Warren said.

"I think we will be looking for another ground."

Meanwhile, Newcastle, the unbeaten leaders of Premiership One, are considering switching some of their matches to St James' Park.

Restricted to a capacity of 6,358 at Kingston Park, Newcastle have already moved next Sunday's game against Bath to Gateshead's athletics stadium, where they are hoping for a crowd close to 10,000.

Cricket

Gough plans rapid link-up with England

DARREN GOUGH is stepping up his campaign to regain full fitness this week and hopes to test himself bowling at top pace in the Headingley indoor nets.

The Yorkshire fast bowler withdrew from the England tour party on New Year's Eve with hamstring trouble but if all goes well now he could link up with his team-mates in Trinidad early next month.

Gough will attempt to work up to full pace indoors and David Graveney, the chairman of selectors, will come to watch him if he reaches the "right level". England play Trinidad and Tobago before the second Test starts in Port of Spain on February 13 and that match might be targeted as a warm-up for Gough.

The England physiotherapist Wayne Morton said: "He will be under supervision at Yorkshire and we will see how he goes. There is a fine line between being totally fit and not quite fit. I've spoken to him twice a week and he's pleased with how it's going."

Jack Russell, dubbed the game's walking teapot, has cut down his daily intake from more than 20 cups to "around a dozen" as part of a stamina-enhancing diet on tour. The wicketkeeper hopes to win his 50th Test cap in Kingston on January 29.

In Pretoria yesterday the Essex all-rounder Graham Napier hit the winning run as England made a fine start to their Under-19 World Cup campaign with a four-wicket victory over New Zealand, whom they dismissed for 180 with the help of three run-outs in 13 balls.

England's pool match today is in Randjesfontein against Namibia, beaten in their first game by Bangladesh, who meet England on Thursday.

In the one-day Independence Cup in Dhaka, Bangladesh were thrashed by nine wickets as Pakistan set up a final tomorrow against India. Pakistan shot out the inexperienced home side for 134 and scored the required runs in 23.2 overs, with the opener Saeed Anwar hitting 11 fours in an unbeaten 73.

Australia's Steve Waugh is expected to miss tomorrow's one-day match against New Zealand in Sydney with a buttock strain.

Tennis

Rusedski stays high for Melbourne as Henman dips

THE British No. 1 Greg Rusedski is likely to be seeded sixth at the Australian Open, which starts on Monday in Melbourne, after retaining his position as world No. 6 in yesterday's ATP rankings. Britain's No. 2 Tim Henman dropped two places to 19th.

Rusedski, playing an exhibition there this week, thus has a good chance of improving his position further because Grand Slam tournaments offer more than double the points of ordinary events.

Today Henman begins the defence of his Sydney international title where Spain yesterday had a miserable start, losing three seeded players in the first round.

The world No. 8 Carlos Moya, last year's beaten finalist in Sydney and Melbourne, went out to Sweden's Thomas Enqvist 6–7, 6–4, 6–4 in sweltering conditions. Alex Corretja lost in straight sets to the German qualifier Hendrik Dreekmann whose compatriot Nicolas Kiefer put out Sergi Bruguera.

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Flaine	101	Mayrhofen	117
La Clusaz	105	Niederau/Oberau	114
La Plagne	103	Obergurgl	120
Les Arcs	106	Saalbach	118
Les Deux Alpes	179	Schladming	183
Meribel	104	Seefeld	184
Montgenevre	111	Soldan	185
Morzine	100	Soll-Ski Welt area	116
Serre Chevalier	181	St. Anton	122
Tignes	107	Westendorf	115
Val d'Isere	107	Zell am See	123
Valmorel	108	NORTH AMERICA	
Val Thorens	104	Aspen	175
Vars	113	Banff	194
ITALY		Breckenridge	183
Bormio	148	Jackson Hole	185
Cervinia	151	Killington	184
Cortina	189	Steamboat	177
Courmayeur	188	Vail	161
Livigno	180	Whistler	194
Sauze d'Oulx	111	SWITZERLAND	
Selva	147	Davos/Klosters	128
SPAIN & ANDORRA		Saas Fee	138
Sierra Nevada	145	St. Moritz	136
Andorra	146	Wengen	132
SCOTLAND	220	Zermatt	137

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

American Football

Favre perfects his Pack drill

Mark Tran on the man the Super Bowl champions say will outplay the great Elway

JOHN ELWAY will seek to crown an illustrious career with a Super Bowl win, a prize that has eluded him in three previous attempts, but his Denver Broncos go to San Diego for Super Bowl XXXII on January 25 as firm underdogs to the remorseless Green Bay Packers.

The Packers underlined their reputation as the NFL's most formidable team when they coolly disposed of the San Francisco 49ers 23–10 on a windy, rainy day at 3Com Park in San Francisco.

"We hadn't lost a game here this year and we fell short of our goal," said San Francisco's coach Steve Mariucci, referring to an 11-game winning home run. "But they were very good. They outplayed us."

The game was much more one sided than the score suggests as the Pack were in control virtually the entire match. The 49ers were dogged by awful position all afternoon, frequently starting a drive from deep within their half. San Francisco managed a late defensive touchdown but by then the Super Bowl champions had their minds on a repeat triumph in San Diego.

While the one-sidedness of the occasion diluted the drama from the NFC Championship battle, the game showed the challenge in store for the Broncos. Brett Favre and the offence were efficient when they needed to be while the defence was particularly solid, holding San Francisco to 257 yards. The 49ers gained only 33 yards rushing and failed to score an offensive touchdown, the first time they have failed to do so in the play-offs since 1987.

The top-seeded 49ers were plagued by errors, penalties, and timid play-calling in their third successive play-off defeat by the Packers. The 49ers sacked George Seifert as head coach last year, replacing him with Mariucci, precisely because of their inability to get past the Packers. But Mariucci was comprehensively outcoached by Mike Holmgren, his Green Bay counterpart.

With the rain turning from a drizzle to a downpour as the afternoon wore on, San Francisco could ill afford giving the ball away. The 49ers did precisely that in the second quarter when Steve Young threw a pass intended for Brent Jones, playing his last game before retiring.

Eugene Robinson pounced on the ball and ran it back for 58 yards. Two plays later Favre found Antonio Freeman on a quick short pass. The Green Bay receiver eluded Marquez Pope and sidestepped Merton Hanks to turn the play into a 27-yard touchdown and give his team a 10-0 lead. That was always going to be a sizeable cushion, given the 49ers' inability to move the ball.

"I'm very proud of our football team under tough conditions," Holmgren said. "I think our defence played an outstanding game. We kept them off-balance and it became a field position game as I expected."

In the AFC title game, the Broncos went into the lion's den at Three Rivers Stadium and came away with a 24–21 triumph at the expense of Pittsburgh. The Steelers led 14–10 until a flurry of points from Denver just before half-time.

Pittsburgh's slide into the abyss began when Kordell Stewart was intercepted in the end zone by Ray Crockett with 4min 10sec left in the first half. Elway, who was intercepted early but played flawlessly for the rest of the day, then led Denver to two quick scoring drives helped by pass interference calls on both occasions.

At 37, time is running out for Elway to ensure his place in Super Bowl history. But this is the strongest AFC team in years to try to end the NFC's 13-season grip on the Vince Lombardi trophy.

Ice Hockey

Storm to appeal after league stands firm on transfer deadline

Vic Batchelder

MANCHESTER STORM are to appeal against the decision by Ian Taylor, the Superleague's chief executive, to refuse them permission to sign a player after the league's December 15 registration deadline.

The Manchester coach Kurt Kleinendorst believes his club should be treated in the same way as the Bracknell Bees who were given until this Friday to replace the Canadian forward Wayde Bucsis who left on December 21 because of a "personal crisis back home".

Taylor said of Manchester's plea: "We've considered it on an individual basis, not on any precedence or previous decision."

An unhappy Kleinendorst said: "I can't for the life of me figure out the difference in the circumstances of the two."

His request was made after the American forward Matt Johnson, who Manchester had agreed terms with and completed all the international clearance paperwork for, left a message on the coach's answerphone 24 hours before the registration deadline saying he was staying in the United States.

Johnson was also intended as a replacement for an American after Rick Judson left the club early in December because his wife wanted to give birth back home in Michigan.

The Storm coach, whose team's 5–3 home win over Ayr on Sunday left them three points behind the Scottish club at the top of the Superleague, does not believe allowances should have been made for anyone.

"We all knew months ahead of the deadline that it was December 15. Deadlines are deadlines and although I appreciate everybody's situation Bracknell shouldn't have been allowed another player. But as they were I think I'm entitled to another player, a precedent has been set."

هكذا من الأصل

Lindsay hints at breakaway, page 13

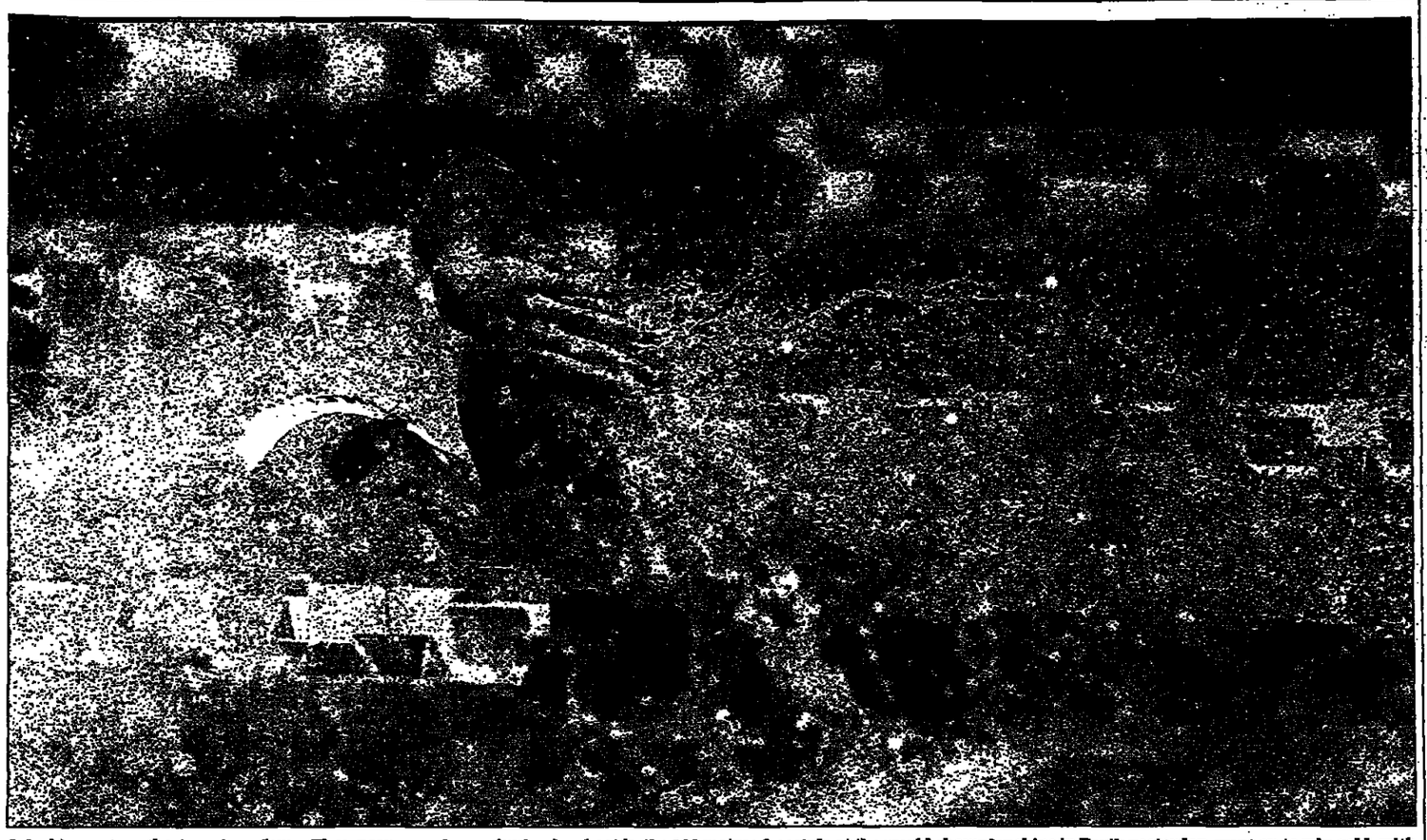
Chelsea target Rangers winger, page 14

London Scottish cite Bath front row, page 15

Gough returns to the nets, page 15

SportsGuardian

Water world



Splashing out . . . the American Jenny Thompson, seen here winning her heat in the 100 metres freestyle at the world championships in Perth yesterday, went on to win gold, with Britain's Susan Rolph coming in a creditable sixth. Paul Palmer, the European 200m freestyle champion, finished a disappointing seventh in his final. China, whose swimmers have complained of unfair media attention following the discovery of human growth hormone in the luggage of a team member Yuan Yuan, bounced back with a victory for Chen Yan in the 400m individual medley. Yuan and her coach Zhou Zhewen, sent home in disgrace, will be told their punishment today. David Hopps, page 15 PHOTOGRAPH: WILLIAM WEST

Six-figure pay-off for Venables to quit Pompey

Martin Thorpe on a costly chapter of high expectations and frustration at Fratton Park

TERRY VENABLES yesterday agreed to part company with Portsmouth in return for a six-figure pay-off, leaving the First Division's bottom club desperately seeking a fresh cash injection to guarantee their future.

Last night the former England coach had still not signed the agreement to leave, but that is expected today when a formal statement will be issued and Venables will officially hand control of the club back to the Gregory family after 17 turbulent months.

When the deal is finally signed, the family's son, Martin, will attempt to sell the club for about £6 million to the American-based Pompey fan-cum-rock singer Brian Howe and the American sports-stadium developer Vince Wolanin when they meet in Paris on Friday.

Portsmouth are desperate for cash to cover losses of £150,000 a month and to strengthen a team who have lost 14 of their last 25 games.

Venables met a Portsmouth director, Brian Henson, acting on behalf of Martin Gregory, in London yesterday to settle the terms of his pay-off — a compromise between the £200,000 offered to Venables and the £500,000 Venables demanded last week.

Gregory, abroad when the deal was struck, was relieved to see Venables leaving. "The time is right for Mr Venables to go," he said. "I realise I am not the most popular man in Portsmouth but things were never this bad. We thought we were pulling one of the world's top coaches but it has not worked."

Venables's next major problem is a High Court case scheduled to begin tomorrow in which the Department of Trade and Industry seek to ban him from being a company director for 15 years. His legal advisers are trying to reach a settlement to prevent the case reaching court.

Venables, 55, arrived at Pompey a national hero in August 1996, fresh from leading England to the semi-finals of Euro 96. He was initially an adviser, brought in by the Gregorys to attract investors prepared to turn Portsmouth into a Premiership force with a new ground and a stock-market flotation.

However, none of this has happened. Instead, the club have experienced one of the most turbulent periods in their history.

The first sign of problems came at the end of March last year when the Portsmouth director Vic Jenner resigned, unhappy with the way the club was being run.

Revelations followed that Pompey were being sued over an unpaid hotel bill, while the role of Venables's close friend Eddie Ashby at Fratton Park was also questioned.

Four months after joining Pompey, Venables became coach to Australia and also announced he would become chairman of the club. Venables agreed to buy the controlling 51 per cent interest in Pompey for £1 last February.

However, it was recently claimed the shares had never been transferred to Venables from the Gregory family — although Venables insisted they had. Yesterday's pay-off was a compromise designed to keep the dispute out of court.

In November the club's £200,000 monthly wages were not paid on time and the Professional Footballers' Association had to make a contribution. Building work on a new £4.5 million stand was halted because funds ran out, though money has since been found to finish it. At the same time it was revealed that Venables had been paid a £300,000 "performance bonus" by Pompey.

During Venables's time as chairman the club sold players worth £5.3 million and paid out around £2 million for 11 players, five of them Australians. But this brought the further criticisms that Venables could not do two jobs at once and that the frequent absence of many of the Australians on international duty weakened the team far too much.

Emerson's Teesside story ends

The wayward Brazilian midfielder, who left Middlesbrough for Tenerife yesterday, gives his final interview to **Michael Walker**

EIGHTEEN months of unpredictable behaviour, questionable commitment and frequent absences finally drew to a close yesterday when Emerson Moises Costa boarded a flight from Portugal to Tenerife having at last severed his links with Middlesbrough.

Emerson has yet to cross the Ts on the 4½-year contract he has agreed with Tenerife — and Middlesbrough were insisting yesterday that he was still, officially, their player — but the boxes are packed in Emerson's home in Ingleby Barwick on the outskirts of Middlesbrough. He will not be back.

Emerson said so from Portugal — where his agent lives — and has for the first time explained his actions, including his non-reappearance after a Christmas break in Brazil. As Emerson's words are often contradicted by his deeds — remember this was the man who said how much he was looking forward to seeing his first white Christmas and flew to Rio hours later — his utterances should be carefully studied. But there is no ambiguity about whom Emerson feels undermined his time on Teesside — the Middlesbrough chief executive Keith Lamb.

"It's not really a problem with the country or Middlesbrough," Emerson said, "and it's not about playing in Spain or England or wherever, it's Lamb. My problem was with Keith Lamb and Steve Gibson [the Boro chairman] but mainly Keith Lamb. He treats players like manual labourers, that's why I decided not to come back [after Christmas]. I'm not a clown and I know Juninho and his father didn't like him.

"My problem was not with Bryan Robson. All the training is a lot better now, much more professional than before. The new training grounds at Darlington are good. But it's them, especially Lamb, he doesn't know anything about football."

Emerson went on to blame Lamb for not allowing him to leave Middlesbrough earlier, saying the £4 million transfer fee was restrictive. "My price is inflated. If you look at Ze Elias who has just joined Internazionale from Bayer Leverkeusen, he is a Brazilian international and plays in the same midfield position as me — but he cost $4 million not £4 million. In the position I play I'm expensive."

That said, Tenerife appear to have matched Middlesbrough's £4 million valuation — the fee Boro paid Porto in July 1996. Tenerife lost away to Deportivo La Coruña on Sunday and remain second bottom of the Spanish first division. Emerson, though, said he had no doubts about Tenerife staying up. "I'm not worried about relegation. The team had a bad patch but have good players."

The implication was that Middlesbrough do not and Emerson said of his former teammates: "If they do go up they will come straight back down unless Middlesbrough invest a lot." That was Emerson's only jibe towards his Boro colleagues and he tried to explain how he differed from them.

"For example, it is no challenge for me to play against Sunderland. But, for the supporters, players and the club, it is a big thing. Even in the FA Cup final I could see that Steve Vickers and the English players were nervous, but for me it was just another game — to them it was a dream. For me a big challenge is to play against Real Madrid."



Emerson . . . 'I'm no clown'

Emerson will have the opportunity to do just that on February 22 when Tenerife entertain the Spanish champions. Middlesbrough face Sunderland the previous day and Boro fans might derive some consolation from the fact that if he is in England, Emerson said he would be at the Riverside that day.

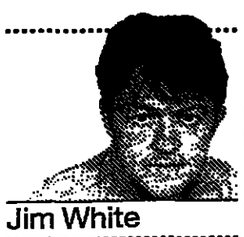
This, he said, would be because Middlesbrough are the only club he wanted to play for in England. Thus when Tottenham Hotspur were connected with Emerson last week he dismissed it as "an old attempt. Bryan Robson told me at the start of the season that they wanted to sign me. But I told him that if I was going to stay in England I wanted to stay with Middlesbrough. Plus, I looked at the Tottenham team and thought they would struggle this season.

"I have had offers to go back to Brazil but I'm not interested — in Brazil you have to kill a lion every day. For six months you are Pele, then two bad games and you are nobody."

The mention of Pele brought a reminder that Emerson had shaken hands with him at a match at Stamford Bridge in December. Pele, having heard of Emerson's exploits, asked if everything was now all right on Teesside. Emerson replied: "Yes, I am okay at Middlesbrough, no problems."

Lamb was not contactable yesterday and Middlesbrough's response came from Robson who said: "I'd certainly sign another Brazilian, it has not put me off them — definitely not. He let his teammates and himself down, it's a shame it ended the way it did because he had gone about things the right way. In fact, he had been talking to the club about a new contract." From Middlesbrough's perspective, it is probably a blessing and a sadness that the new contract Emerson had in mind was with Tenerife.

Additional reporting by Leonardo Rocha



Jim White

City recipe is just right to bring on the Branson

TYNESIDE is, by tradition, the cradle of that great football institution, the rumour. Information spins about the place, embroidered at every turn with all the enthusiasm of a Bayeux housewife. At any one moment interested parties in pubs or school playgrounds can learn exactly how Newcastle's new continental signing strained his groin, whose wife the star striker was entertaining prior to his unexpected transfer, or what precisely was the purpose of the gathering of the first team in the gents in that new bar the night before last week's game.

The essence of a good football rumour is that it should shock, amuse and always be prefaced with the remark "of course you know the real reason why . . ." But above all, it should, if you swallow hard and narrow your eyes, be plausible. Thus the tale touring Newcastle on the anniversary of Kenny Dalglish's arrival in the town is unlikely to catch on. Who, on the evidence currently available at St James' Park, is ever likely to fall for the line that United were recently the most attractive team in the country?

Indeed, should it persist with such ludicrous suppositions, Newcastle is in danger of losing its position at the head of the rumour championship to its closest rival, Manchester. Particularly as there is a yarn in circulation there of such delight you crave for it to be true. According to a taxi driver I met the other day, who had it on good authority from a neighbour whose brother-in-law attends the same Alcoholics Anonymous clinic as a figure close to Maine Road, Manchester City's troubles will soon be over. Richard Branson is about to buy the club.

The possibilities of this liaison are delicious. City is, after all, virgin territory: unsullied by success in a generation. And those little extras Branson's company puts into its planes would work particularly well at Maine Road: computer-game consoles in the back of the seats in the Kippax stand, for instance, would keep fans cheerfully distracted during matches. Besides, with his experience of buying up the rail network, Branson has learnt all there is to know about how to deal with disgruntled customers.

City fans complaining as their club sinks faster than a holed balloon could expect to be buried under an avalanche of photocopied letters signed "Your friend, Richard" asking them to bear with him and blaming all the trouble on years of under-investment by the previous management.

Yet the more you consider the idea of a Branson/City consummation the more likely it begins to sound. Alan Sugar is anxious to tell anyone willing to listen that the days of the wealthy butcher or baker snapping up his local football team are over. The cost of entry into Premiership ownership is now too high, even for the richest of individuals; autocratic owners in the mould of Doug Ellis, Ken Bates or Sugar himself bought into the game long before its present economic ascendancy.

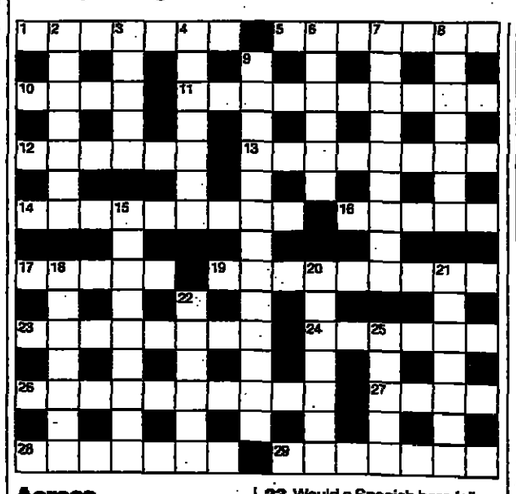
Yet, for the rich man seeking to make even more, football would seem to be a grand investment. Sir John Hall, the great Newcastle philanthropist, converted an original investment of £65 million into £110 million in five years when he sold his club to City institutions last year.

Even Branson might be pushed to find that sort of cash in his current account. But a club on its uppers, its value denuded by years of careless management, would be available on the cheap: £30 million is the price which, it is rumoured, might satisfy Francis Lee. And though Noel Gallagher might have sneered at injecting capital into City, suggesting he would be better off dropping twenties down the grid, Branson has proved more than willing to take a long-term position. After all, anyone who has bought the London-Glasgow rail route or the London Broncos can hardly be addicted to immediate results. If, in three years, a Virgin-invigorated City were to find themselves back in the Premiership, back in contention, the idea to invest in the club will look like immaculate conception.

In short, he's got the money, they've got the potential. On paper, not to mention in the back of a taxi, Branson and City seem like a match made in heaven. But then, that's what Hello magazine said about Gazza and Sheeza.

Guardian Crossword No 21,170

Set by Plodge



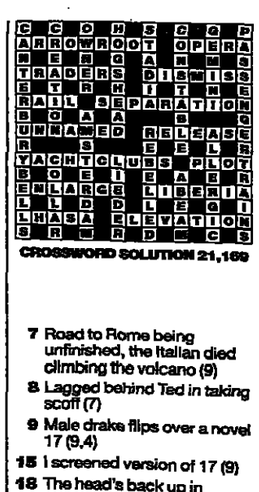
Across

1 The essence of roses flowed in Walpole's 17 of 16 (7)
5 For solidity, dive to what sounds like town (7)
10 One of 9's set made a comeback in "Gotterdämmerung" (4)
11 Can Shaw's 17 take in a bone fracture? (10)
12 Slater's been given a pound for the cultivator (6)
13 Sadly, only heartless men admitted (8)
14 A moving description of how one heritage group managed the rest (2,7)
16 An area of pitched ground? With nobs on! (5)
17 Socks in posh 15 (5)
19 Porky Empress's 17 of 16 will be arriving in seconds (9)
23 Would a Spanish hero fall for such a sweetie? (4,4)
24 When young, Anne's 17 had these bits on the side (6)
26 The well-know writer in very large island, the last to start (4,6)
27 A time when old sailing ships lacked impudence? (4)
28 Turns up as a race reaches the finish (7)
29 Without resistance, waves to the mugs (7)

Down

2 The horologer's cat, on about being goody-goody (7)
3 Make use of a curtain call (5)
4 A capital three-fold article! (7)
6 Praises former partner's taking back share (6)
7 Road to Rome being unfinished, the Italian died climbing the volcano (9)
8 Lagged behind Ted in taking scoff (7)
9 Male drake flips over a novel 17 (9,4)
15 I screened version of 17 (9)
18 The head's back up in charge! The firm's back on time! (7)
20 Close fastening on evening wear (7)
21 Was the scavenger spotted in the jungle an ermine? (7)
22 An intimate devil to hug the Queen! (6)
25 Work Blake did on Dickens' 17 (5)

Solution tomorrow



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,169

7 Road to Rome being unfinished, the Italian died climbing the volcano (9)
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Solution tomorrow

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NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.8% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997
ASPPRT

There have been no diplomatic incidents, no cock-ups, no misunderstandings. The nearest to an embarrassment was during the traditional tea ceremony at the weekend when the visitors had to take off their shoes, revealing Campbell had a hole in his sock.
Ewen MacAskill on Tony Blair's visit to Japan

G2 page 4